Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

PEOPLE'S CONVENTION

NUMBER

ADAMS • DUTT
HALDANE
PRITT

JANUARY 1941 SIXPENCE

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LABOUR MONTHLY DEVELOPMENT FUND

	£	s.	d.
Ivor and Margaret		2	0
J. Buchanan		1	0
M. P. (G)		10	0
B. Carritt (G)		2	6
F. Lister		5	0
A. Mitchell		5	0
R. I. C. (G)		2	6
M. Christopher (G)		2	6
Pinner Disc. Grp. (G)		3	6
Q. (G)		4	0
A. E. Owen		12	9
J. A. Smith (G)		2	0
J. J. Christie		2	6
E. C. Borrodaile		2	6
J. B. H. D.		5	0
H. A. R. D. (G)		3	0
T. Illingworth			6
R. I. C. (2nd G)		2	6
H. W. S., N.W.10		5	0
N. W. B. (G)		1	0
Miss Ewing		5	0
E. Ferrisey		2	0
F. Redfern (G)		5	6
H. S. Marshall (G)		2	6
R. R., Manchester (G)		10	0
Miss Behenna (G)		5	0
I. R. Lloyd (G)		2	0
L. Birch		5	0
J. Steele		1	0
Hampstead Garden Sub. Dis Group (G)		5	6
M. G., Ayr		4	3
A. P. M.		1	6
Ian Gibson-Smith		5	8
R. M.		10	0
Mary Christopher (G)		2	6
Anon., Epsom		5	0
Soldier Pal		5	0
C. H. Bulman (G)		5	0
T. Islwyn Nicholas		5	0
D. Gardiner		1	0
Colin Penn		15	0
R. B., Johannesburg		8	0
Gruzya Uchitiellya, Bristol (G)	1	17	0
G. Reddish		5	0
Anon., Whitchurch			6
J., E. C. I.		10	0
G. P. Nodes			6
Bromley Left Book Club		10	0
Juvenis		1	6
M. J. Carritt (G)	1	0	0
R. R. (G)	1	0	0
One Year (G)	1	0	0
J. R. Horth (G)		2	0
Corporal		2	6
M. P., Harrow		5	0
M. K. Thompson		2	6
M. W. Errock (G)		6	0
Swindon Bookshop	1	1	0
Army Signalman		4	0
N. Kelly (G)		2	6
J. B., Chelmsford (G)		5	0
G.F.B., Newcastle (G)		5	0
Basil Burton		15	0
Anon., Wembley		2	6
E. P. (G)	2	0	0
H. W., Halifax		2	6
D. Tecwyn Lloyd (G)		1	6
A. H. Draper (G)		1	6
T. W. R. (G)		10	0
Dr. Joan Garrett	5	0	0
S. E. Boatfield		2	6
Anon., Reading		5	0
Whitehall Civil Servt.		2	6
R. W. Passingham		2	6
E. B.		2	3
Ann L. Davies (G)		10	0
Anon., Dudley		2	6
S. B.			6
S. Berry (G)		5	0
K. Oliver Murray		10	0
Thos. Green		2	6
V. L. Kinsman		1	0
A. H. G.		15	0
G. J. Haddock		1	0
A. V. (G)		2	0
M. L. Workman		5	0
W. Matthews		2	6
Mrs. L. Young		2	6
Miss M. Gray		2	6
Whitchurch, Glam.		2	6
Pinner Disc. Gr. (G)		3	6
Ronald Howell		1	0
R. F. B. (G)	1	0	0
Private C. N.		5	0
F. E. Love		2	6
M. R. Davies			6
J. T. Pound		2	6
H. S. Marshall (G)		5	0
J. F. Boyce		2	6
J. Wedge (G)		7	6
A. Musket	1	0	0
K. B. Barber		5	0
John Hendy		2	6
M. Kitchin		5	0
Mrs. Alcock		2	0
A. H. Speight		2	6
C. V. E.			6
K. H. Evans		10	0
R. I. C. (G)		2	6
J. W. Porter (G)		2	6
Five Bermondsey Comrades (G)		2	6
J. and M. Bacon (G)		2	6
M. E. B. (G)		1	0
Red Gunner		2	6
B. J. Constable		1	0
G. M. Harrison		5	0
Sympathiser	1	0	0
Hyde Disc. Group		5	0
Finchley Disc. Gr. (G)		3	0
A. Trowler		5	0
Ivor Thomas		2	6
Corporal (G)		2	6
G. M. B.		2	6
N. W. B. (G)		1	6
Democratic Scot	5	0	0
J. S.	10	0	0
A Socialist Officer	5	0	0
Grateful Sympathisers, Leeds	1	10	0
D. Tecwyn Lloyd (G)		1	6
Q. (G)		4	0
Mrs. C. Harding	1	0	0
N. and E. Lipton (G)		2	6
Major J. Marston		12	6
Two Democrats		5	0
W. Stuard		2	0
Oxford Scientists		13	0
F. H. Shepherd (G)		5	0
Plymothians		4	0
Whitchurch, Glam.		2	6
D. P. Blayney		5	0
Aylesbury Dis. Gr. (G)		5	6
Bolshevik Tank Driver		5	0
Soldier Comrade (G)		10	0
Red N.C.O.'s (G)		11	6
TOTAL	£65	6	5

TOTAL FOR YEAR 1940

£444:9:7

Nothing could exceed our disappointment at falling short of the £500 aimed at for the year (the figure is £444. 9*s.* 7*d.*), except our exhilaration at the colossal increase in our circulation, both general and postal. Doubtless our friends were so occupied in sending Christmas presents to their other friends, consisting of a year's subscription to LABOUR MONTHLY, that they overlooked to send us our own Christmas present. Elsewhere in this number (see "A Record of Progress") you will find the reasons why we still need cash, in spite of our improved circulation. So, in the words of two of our Guarantors, please make a New Year Resolution (and keep it!) to "Earn the proud G", and "let it become a habit."

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 23 JANUARY 1941 NUMBER 1

Editor:
R. PALME DUTT

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A Record of Progress

THE PAST YEAR has been one of great expansion of the sales and influence of the LABOUR MONTHLY.

Ever since 1921 the LABOUR MONTHLY has devoted itself to the examination of the political and industrial problems confronting the British Labour movement and the establishment of the path leading to the achievement of socialism in Great Britain. The war not only enormously increased the scope and tasks of the LABOUR MONTHLY, it also brought the confirmation of everything written by it prior to the war.

The fruits of that confirmation, and of the steady work of the readers and friends of the LABOUR MONTHLY, are evident in the great progress achieved since the outbreak of war.

Our rising circulation

The following table shows the rise in circulation since the outbreak of war:

	TOTAL PRINT	TOTAL SALES
August, 1939	8,800	7,500
September, 1939	9,200	7,000
October, 1939	8,800	8,500
November, 1939	9,300	8,396
December, 1939	10,500	9,426
January, 1940	12,000	10,469
February, 1940	16,000	14,221
March, 1940	18,000	14,733
April, 1940	16,000	14,871
May, 1940	16,000	14,580
June, 1940	14,000*	13,800
July, 1940	12,600†	12,400
August, 1940	15,000	13,600
September, 1940	13,500	13,250
October, 1940	14,016	14,000
November, 1940	16,500	16,500
December, 1940	21,000	20,000

* No returns rule came into operation.

† Foreign export ban came into complete operation.

Before the war about 20,000 copies were sold outside Great Britain. Already in January a partial ban on exports was in operation, while in July the ban was made complete, cutting off the entire foreign circulation.

Nevertheless, the losses were more than made up by the further development of home sales.

Thus, we start the New Year with the achievement of a 20,000 sale. This phenomenal increase reflects the heightened political consciousness among the rank and file of the working class and the growing desire for a basic Marxist treatment of the many new problems raised by the war.

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Income and Expenditure

The financial position of the LABOUR MONTHLY has always been a difficult one. That it has been possible to continue publication throughout these years in spite of all difficulties is due entirely to the devoted support of its readers, who alone have helped to bridge the gap between income and expenditure.

At the outset of the war, the LABOUR MONTHLY was faced by mounting debts and rising costs of production. Nevertheless, rigid economy, cheapening of production in respect of paper and format, aided by the rise of circulation and the growing success of the Development Fund, have enabled the journal to surmount these difficulties. The average monthly income and expenditure for the first year of the war was as follows:

Expenditure

Production costs	£141	10	0
Postage and carriage	16	10	0
Advertising	12	10	0
Stationery and general printing	3	10	0
Rent and rates	7	0	0
Miscellaneous office expenses	9	0	0
Wages	15	0	0
	£205	0	0

Income

Sales income	180	0	0
Donations	23	0	0
Advertisements	6	0	0
	£209	0	0

The improved financial position now makes further development possible.

The Debt and Guarantee Fund

In January, 1940, the amount given to the Development Fund was £8. 14*s.* In October it was £82. 1*s.* 10*d.* The total for the whole year was £444 9*s.* 7*d.* This in itself is a record of success.

We have now at last been able to pay off all our outstanding debts; we are now solvent. This is very satisfactory but it has only been attained through the generosity of our many friends, supplemented by the most stringent economy.

A special feature this year has been the hundreds of inspiring letters received from readers in all fields of activity. Their enthusiastic appreciation shows that the LABOUR MONTHLY is indeed playing an ever more important rôle in Britain.

We are still absolutely dependent on the support of our readership. Not only do we want to maintain the journal at the modest price of 6*d.*, in spite of rising costs, we want to embark on a programme of further expansion. So, once again, we urge every reader not only to give generously to the Development Fund, but to give regularly, becoming a monthly Guarantor.

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"Labour Monthly" Conferences

An important political rôle was played by the LABOUR MONTHLY Delegate Conference held in London in February, 1940. This conference was attended by 878 delegates from 379 organisations, and was the most widely attended Delegate Conference held since the outbreak of war.

The success of this conference revealed the deep desire of the rank and file of the Labour movement to find a way forward against the paralysis of the official leadership and was a measure of the significance of the LABOUR MONTHLY in winning these forces to the support of an active policy of leadership. It is noteworthy that a great increase in sales coincided with the holding of this conference.

Other conferences were held in Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield, Cardiff, Leeds and Birmingham.

Readers' Discussion Groups

A notable event since the war has been the establishment of Readers' Groups which arose spontaneously in a number of localities for the purpose of study and discussion of the contents of the LABOUR MONTHLY and for support of the Development Fund.

By the end of the year some 50 groups were in existence. A syllabus to assist discussion is now being circulated each month. It is clear that great political importance attaches to the wide development of Discussion Groups.

Future Developments

The new year faces us with new and bigger tasks. With the advance of the mass movement, new issues arise before the Labour movement.

The LABOUR MONTHLY has an important rôle in explaining and popularising the programme of the People's Convention Movement. It has a duty to expose the "left" Social Democratic theories which are increasingly being put forward as the official policy of support for the war becomes discredited. Empire and colonial issues claim more attention.

We want to develop new writers. We encourage our readers to send in articles. Although the limitations of space are very great, every contribution sent in is very carefully considered.

We want to develop the network of Readers' Discussion Groups.

We intend to publish more LABOUR MONTHLY War Pamphlets, of which No. 1, has been such a conspicuous success.

To fulfil these tasks, the LABOUR MONTHLY looks forward to further development and expansion during the coming year. Our record of 20,000 circulation is only a point of departure.

We must break that record. We must win new subscribers and readers. By a suitable publicity campaign, by the work of the MONTHLY itself, by the help of its supporters, we must bring the journal to the attention of new circles of potential readers.

Such are the plans on which we are confidently embarking in 1941.

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Notes of the Month

The People's Convention—A Critical Turning-Point—Towards Catastrophe —Forging a Common Programme—No Illusions—The Crisis of the British Empire—The Gamble and the Price—Anglo-American Amenities— "A Hard, Dangerous Year"—Prophets of Gloom—American Re-armament—Financial Sharpers—Roosevelt's Plan—What Outlook for the British People?—Prolonging the War—More Sacrifices— "A National Wages Policy"—The Path of France—Celebrating the Nazi Model—The Perspective—Tasks of the Convention

AT THE outset of 1941 the People's Convention is summoned to meet. The events of the coming year will show how much depends on the outcome of this gathering, and how great is the responsibility which falls on every delegate. The attacks and threats which are now being launched against the Convention are a recognition of its significance. If hundreds and thousands of elected delegates gather from every part of the country, with their expenses raised, not by wealthy central organisations and government-subsidised propaganda machines, but by the sacrifice of their local supporters; if the largest halls of the big towns are filled with enthusiastic audiences to hear the message of the Convention, while the Government spokesmen, Labour Party leaders or combined efforts of the three official parties cannot win more than meagre, handpicked or hostile audiences; if many of the principal factories and industrial enterprises in the main centres, especially of war industry, are sending duly elected delegates from their workers and works committees; all this is a phenomenon whose importance the Cabinet Ministers, press lords and trade union chiefs understand very well in fact, whatever they may affect to say in public. Such a development would not be possible without a serious basis and a widely representative demand. The strength of the response to the People's Convention is a measure of the growth of the crisis both within the country and in the development of the war. The Convention is beginning to win recognition as the initial rallying ground of the democratic opposition to the present Tory Coalition Government; the representative of the only practical alternative immediate programme to that of the Government; and the challenging claimant for the formation of an alternative Government. The Convention meets in the midst of gathering class conflicts in industry, which are being countered with threats of coercive action and new forms of compulsory organisation by the Government. It meets on the eve of the most menacing new developments of the war, which bear more and more heavily on the economic and political situation in this country. The crisis of the British people under the existing régime is deepening. In this deepening crisis the Convention represents the first serious and broadly based attempt to rally the people, to stem the tide which is leading them to disaster and to wrest power before it is too late from the bankrupt ruling class which is destroying the people.

WHAT is the situation which has brought together the many diverse trends and elements represented in the People's Convention? It is a

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situation of formidable gravity for the people of this country, and a challenge to all that is living in the working class and democratic movement. All the Government propaganda to distract attention from the plain facts of the present position, the noisy celebration of military victories in the desert or exultation over the sufferings of enemy peoples, cannot conceal the grim realities which the people of this country have to face and which the perspective of the war and the Government's policy is bringing. The Convention is meeting at a turning point of the war and of the fortunes of the people of this country. Many aspects of what is happening, although still only in an initial form, although their full import is still not widely realised, are affecting more and more directly all sections of the population. For the masses of the people the collapse of their living standards, the shortage of food and all supplies, and the threat of limitless further restrictions (alongside the unchanged luxurious standards of the rich) are bringing desperate problems. The teachers are aware of the breakdown in the educational system. The doctors are aware of the menace of disease epidemics extending in forms long unknown. The economists, industrial administrators, technicians of the large trusts or harassed owners of small businesses, as well as the observant skilled workers in industry, are aware of the economic chaos, disorganisation, corruption and profiteering, which expresses itself in scandal after scandal, the coal scandal, the railways scandal, the cement scandal, etc. It is a symptom of the situation when a mass organisation like the South Wales Miners' Federation (which originally went on record in support of the war, and which is now represented in the Convention) can "warn the Government and all concerned with the South Wales coal area that its population is being driven to ruin and destruction".

For the trade unionists the elementary rights which they have won by the struggle of generations are now under attack and being undermined, to be replaced by a system of war enslavement. For the whole labour movement, the abdication of the official leadership, its coalition with Tory Big Business and the paralysis of the normal machinery is endangering the existence of any independent working class movement. Democrats are aware that the judgment of the late American Ambassador that "democracy is finished" in Britain is not so devoid of foundation as the official press comment would like to imply. Many of those who originally gave their support to the Government and the war in the belief that they were entering into a fight against fascism are realising with increasing sharpness how completely different are the aims of the financial interests in control, which utilise their support, as in the last war, for maintaining and extending the military domination of conquered peoples in the Empire, for purposes of counter-revolution against the spread of the socialist revolution in Europe, and for hostility to the Soviet Union.

All these and many other issues are drawing together the representatives of many sections and trends in the common meeting-ground of the People's Convention; and the representatives gathered in this first assembly are only the forerunners of the far wider numbers awakening to the struggle. Beginning from many differing viewpoints, they are finding their way to a common political formulation in relation to present needs. It will be a foremost task

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of the Convention to hammer out such a common programme. But they are in fact united in a common purpose. They are united in the sense of the urgency of the situation. They are united in the determination to act and to struggle on behalf of the interests of the people. They are united in distrust of the present rulers and all the representatives of the big propertied class interests whose policy has led the people to the present pass; and this distrust is shared by the widest sections of the people, both in civilian life and in the forces. And they are united in their resolve to end the power of the present Government and establish a representative Government of the working people in order, in common with the peoples of other countries, to find their way from the war and the breakdown of the old society.

THE tasks of the Convention are governed by the character of the present emergency. Any estimate of those tasks must be based on the most sober and realist estimate of the present situation. Many critics of the Convention, and especially those in the labour and democratic movement who still hesitate to support it, often declare their agreement and sympathy with the aims expressed in the Six Points of the Convention Call, but express scepticism of the possibility of realising them; they argue that the programme is "utopian"; the obstacles are too great; it is impossible to change the Government in wartime; the risks involved in any serious mass struggle would only bring greater evils. The best answer to such criticism is to face with clearness the alternative. The supporters of the Convention indulge in no easy optimism. They are under no illusions as to the obstacles in the path or the magnitude of the task they are undertaking. They know that the present range of influence reached is only a beginning and a foundation for the range which must be reached in order to mobilise the struggle of the people and lead to a real change of Government. But they are also aware that the alternative, the refusal of struggle, the continuance of the policy of the present Government and bankrupt ruling oligarchy means the certainty of catastrophe for the people, and shipwreck for the working class and democratic movement, outweighing any of the risks involved in active struggle.

THIS estimate is based on hard facts. The full urgency of the present situation is still only beginning to be understood, and is indeed more sharply realised from their standpoint by the rulers than by the mass of the people, who are still half-drugged by censorship and the concealment of information, and are only beginning to grope their way through the fog to the awakening consciousness that something is deeply wrong. The crisis of capitalism which is expressed in the present war is affecting most directly and heavily British imperialism, the oldest, largest and most ramshackle of the capitalist Empires. From the last war British imperialism emerged as the formal victor; but it had in reality received a crippling blow, and it emerged with its whole economic and political structure deeply weakened, and its former world monopoly basically undermined. The two decades which followed showed the depth of the malady, which was at first falsely interpreted as a temporary unsettlement due to the war instead of being seen in its true light in relation to the basic changes in the power-relations of imperial-

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ism, as well as in the whole stage of capitalism. Those two decades saw a prolonged economic decline and decay, which all the quack measures of the successive capitalist statesmen of that era could not check or cure, and which left deep scars in the life and in the bodies of the people.

WITH the present war the rulers of the dying British Empire have made their desperate gamble—always at the expense of the peoples on whom they have already inflicted so many sufferings. They refused the path of the Peace Front, because they foresaw that the victory of peace would mean the victory of socialism and the peoples and the end of their Empire. They failed in their plan to play the jackal and turn their rivals to war with socialism. Therefore they finally chose the path of war as the only means to cleave a way through their dilemmas with the sword. But they chose the path of war under far more unfavourable strategic conditions than in the last war: with their former Russian imperialist ally vanished and vanquished by the power of socialism; with their former French imperialist ally in break-up and on the eve of dissolution; with their former Italian imperialist ally scorning their offered bribes and blandishments; in fact, without an ally in Europe; with weakened economic and financial reserves, and against a more powerfully organised German imperialism.

STEP by step the price of that gamble is being paid. Under the leadership of the gambler Churchill they are still playing for the stakes of winning all or losing all, though some faint-hearts in their ranks shrink before the cost and long for a settlement, before the anger of the peoples shall close the account of all the gamblers. The "glittering prizes", in their own phrase, of world domination, of disposing of the world, crushing all their rivals and crushing socialism, lure them on.* To maintain and extend their world domination they levy and conscript the colonial peoples, at a time when the rising movement of revolt of these peoples is far more advanced than in the last war. To maintain and extend their world domination, they plunge their own people of the island centre of the Empire ever deeper in the abyss of misery, and take from them the toll of blood and treasure, subjecting them to hunger and disease and ruin. To win the prize, they tie themselves ever closer body and soul to the American rival, whose eagle talons fasten relentlessly

* One of the frankest statements of the real war aims as the re-establishment of the dominant British world economic position was recently made by the City Editor of the *Evening Standard:*

"The whole of our national investment position is bound up with victory. We see evidence of that in the position of the Austrian bonds issued under the auspices of the League of Nations. To-day there is only one nation left in Europe capable of meeting its portion of the guarantee—and that is Britain.

"A complete victory subject to the financial reorganisation which would come with it would establish those securities. Indeed, it would go a long way towards re-establishing the whole British world economy and making good many positions which have become unsound in recent years. There are great opportunities ahead for the British people." (*Evening Standard*, December 10th, 1940.)

The motto, "Die to Make the World Safe for British Investors" is here stated with commendable explicitness. It is to be hoped that the promised Cabinet War Aims document will not fail to make clear this practical meaning of Victory.

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upon the heritage of their Empire, while it urges them on to ever more reckless suicidal efforts. They have already proclaimed publicly their readiness in case of need to abandon the island and its people to their fate, and to betake themselves elsewhere in order to continue their battle for world domination on the basis of their world possessions and sea power. The practical execution of such a programme may be less easy than its proclamation; but the American "partner" has already been quick to bind them to it with a written bond. The fact of such a proclamation is already a measure of the distance travelled from the last war.

THE current Anglo-American interchanges and negotiations throw the most cruel and merciless light upon the present situation of British imperialism. Never has the deep-lying Anglo-American antagonism reached in reality so acute a point as in the present exchanges between these "friends". The lords of the British Empire have been at pains to plead and paint in the blackest colours their desperate plight, their financial exhaustion, their shortage of shipping and production, the menace to their communications, and the close menace of invasion, and the consequent impossibility of their continuing the war unless greatly increased American aid should be immediately forthcoming, with the implied threat (officially denied—an excellent way of making it) that, if such aid should not be forthcoming, they might find themselves regretfully compelled to make the best settlement they could with German imperialism at the expense of American interests. In reply, the lords of Wall Street have applied the Means Test to the applicant, instituted official inquiries into his assets, indicated the large volume of hidden reserves still unpawned, carefully probed each sore and pain, depicted an even blacker picture of his situation and prospects to depreciate the suitor, and instituted the most ingenious devices, avoiding the mistake of the last war of taking paper for goods, for extracting the maximum material and strategic advantage for each aid given.

IT was on November 23rd that Lord Lothian explained to America that England "needs aircraft, munitions, ships and perhaps a little financial help", and that "our securities on the American market will be used up before long". On November 27th Greenwood explained to an alarmed House of Commons that "production was down in some respects", that "enemy air attacks had retarded our expanding programme . . . it had embarrassed us and would continue to embarrass us", and that in respect of the "very heavy shipping losses" "the position was much like that of April, 1917". Since then, shipping losses advanced from 81,000 tons in the first week of December to 101,000 tons in the second week of December. Sir Walter Citrine was sent to America to declare that "British arms production has not yet caught up with Germany's. Except in the field of plane production we are relatively worse off than we were when the war began. We have definitely not overtaken Germany in armament production. We anticipate a very hard time in the spring" (speech at Cleveland, Ohio: press, December 19th). On December 11th Lord Lothian delivered his last speech in which for the first time it was officially declared that British victory was only possible on the basis of American aid: "1941 is going to be a hard, dangerous

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year"; the British Navy "is strung out terribly thin"; "with help from you we are confident that we can win, and win decisively, by 1942. . . . With your help in aeroplanes, munitions, ships and on the sea and in the field of finance, now being discussed between your Treasury and ours, we are sure of victory."

THE American press was not slow to stress the gloomy prospects of the British position. On November 30th the New York correspondent of the *News-Chronicle* reported

"a new wave of pessimism in the United States over the British position. The opinion is heard and read—in conversations, on the radio, in newspapers—that the effect of Nazi raids on Britain's industrial production has been bad and that the people are getting war-weary.
One commentator here starts off his column with this sentence: "Perhaps officials are not in a position to say so, but Britain's position looks to be little short of desperate"

The Times, on November 28th reported:

Some American newspapers have this week printed a number of articles from their admirable correspondents in London taking a very gloomy view of British shipping prospects and war production. . . . The impression is being fostered . . . that we are near the end of our resources.

By mid-December the pessimism took on a semi-official character. On December 18th *The Times* noted reports:

. . . that the Defence Commissioners, Mr. William Knudsen and Mr. Edward Stettinius had, at Mr. Hull's request, privately told the Executive Board of the National Association of Manufacturers that Great Britain "cannot long hold out unless she receives immediately increased aid" from this country. Mr. Hull's reply neither confirmed nor denied this, but he said that he had spoken to many "frankly, but in no alarmist sense."

WHEN, however, it came to the practical question of increased material aid or financial aid, difficulties were found to lie in the path. "The amount of aid which could go to Great Britain", declared President Roosevelt on November 22nd, "bore a direct relation to American productive capacity. It was at its maximum as that capacity stood to-day and would remain tied to that capacity." This was borne out by the statistics of steel production, which in the first week of December was within 3 per cent of capacity. The *London Times*, however, of December 9th, found that "the effort has not yet been great enough"; and, while Lord Beaverbrook, on December 18th, spoke broadly of a future expectation of receiving 26,000 aeroplanes from America in 1942, *The Times* of December 19th coldly pointed out that the actual production of military aeroplanes in the United States had only reached 700 a month. It was evident that any serious expansion of this would require time and would not be able seriously to affect the "hard, dangerous year 1941". Further, it could only be carried out by drastic compulsory reorganisation and limitation of civil consumption, or the imposition of war economy on a country at peace. Thus the programme of the American millionaires to foment the war in Europe from outside, and

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use the British people in the same way as Britain sought to use France or Poland, requires the parallel imposition of a fascist type of economy in the United States as in Britain. The political conditions for such measures, however, are not easily obtained without direct involving in the war. In this way the negotiations of the Anglo-American millionaires for prolonging the war hasten the development to world war and the destruction of democracy in both Britain and the United States.

ON the side of finance, the British pleas of approaching exhaustion of available resources were met by elaborate estimates of the considerable resources still unsold throughout the Empire and also in South America, that is, wherever American capital was utilising the opportunity to extend its penetration at the expense of Britain. The Chairman of the Senate Foreign Committee declared that "when and if the question of credits arises, it will be pertinent to inquire into British resources in this country". The Senate Banking Committee was authorised "to inquire into foreign capital, investments and balances in the United States". The question of pawning further islands was considered; but the Secretary of the Treasury, Morgenthau, preferred to "look into the liquid assets first":

When he was asked about the possible taking over of British possessions as a consideration in the extension of financial aid to Great Britain, he would say no more than: "We must look into the liquid assets first." (*Times*, November 29.)

In December the British Permanent Under-Secretary of the Treasury was sent to present "a balance-sheet" to the American uncle.

FINALLY President Roosevelt came out with his brilliant solution to "lease" or "mortgage" the arms to Britain. He explained that it had been suggested that the arms might be given as a free gift, but that he refrained from such a course out of a delicate consideration for British "*amour propre*":

Others suggested gifts, but he did not think that British *amour propre* would like it. (*Times* report, December 18th.)

Next day with no less delicacy *The Times* hastened to explain that Britain would not let any consideration of *amour propre* stand in the way of receiving a free gift:

It was a generous suggestion, and one which no consideration of *amour propre* need have prevented us from accepting.

With such high-mindedness on both sides, of the Americans to refrain from offending British *amour propre*, and of the British to refrain from letting *amour propre* stand in the way of a free gift, the free gift never came off. Instead, President Roosevelt's plan held the field by which the United States would dispatch the arms to Britain, and Britain, after consuming them, would be required after the war to return them in new condition, that is, to produce new ones up-to-date for nothing for the United States after the war. The British people would thus be required, first, to spend their blood to win the war for the ultimate hegemony of the United States, and then to labour after

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the war, for nothing, in order to provide American capitalism with the arms to complete its hegemony and finally absorb the British Empire. Truly, a brilliant plan worthy of this pair.

THIS question of the relations of Britain and the United States at the present point is of pivotal importance, not only for the world situation, but for the perspective in Britain and for the light it throws on the British situation. The present crisis of British imperialism is acute; and the increasing subordination to the United States is an index of it. But this crisis raises the gravest and most urgent problems for the British people. The financial oligarchy which has so long plundered and dominated the world is reaching a situation which is ever more clearly revealing its bankruptcy and decadence, and which is leading it to resort to the most desperate measures at the expense of the people to maintain its world power and possessions. Within the conditions of continued capitalist class domination in Britain the outlook for the people is a black one. A point has been reached at which the alternatives take on extreme sharpness. The way out for the people can only be achieved at the expense of the ruling class. The measures in which the ruling class sees the only hope of salvation spell ruin for the people.

WHAT are the solutions of the ruling class for the crisis? The first is to place their hopes in the United States, even at the expense of heavy concessions to the hated American rival. These calculations mean in practice the indefinite enlargement and prolongation of the war. They mean the sacrifice of both peoples to the interests of the Anglo-American millionaires. They mean the pledging of the life and labour of the British people, both during the war and after it, to the rising power of Wall Street, in the hope that the British rulers may be allowed to continue as junior partners in the new constellation:

> The question of leadership need hardly arise. If any permanently closer association of the two nations is achieved, an island people of fifty millions cannot expect to be the senior partner. The centre of gravity and the ultimate decision must increasingly lie with America. We cannot resent this historical development. (*Economist*, October 19th, 1940.)

But these calculations are in reality long-term calculations of a very hypothetical nature. The expected aid from America cannot immediately affect in a more than limited degree the acute crisis of the next six months.

THEREFORE the second line of solution becomes the more immediately important. The second line of solution is to extract the most extreme sacrifices from the British people. All rights and standards must now make way to save British imperialism in its hour of crisis. Food imports must be rigidly cut down. All possible shipping space must be reserved for war imports or for imports of raw materials for war production for the export trade. All production must be turned to the requirements of war industry or the production of export goods to meet the mountainous adverse balance of trade and pay for the imports of war materials. Whatever goes for mere

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civil consumption, for the needs of the people, is regarded as lost. Civil consumption must be ruthlessly cut down to a minimum; and in a class society this means of course that the consumption, not of the rich and luxurious, but of the poor and needy must be cut down to a minimum.

But how are the new measures, going far beyond anything attempted in the first year of the war, to be imposed, in view of the war-scarcity of labour and the consequent enhanced bargaining power of the workers, if they stand up for their demands? Nearly three million workers have put in demands for wage increases to meet the soaring cost of living. It is not enough to have drawn over the leading trade union officials to the side of the war machine, if the workers still go forward with their demands, with the looming possibilities of action. The formal prohibition of strikes is not enough, if strikes still continue, small in scale at present, but more numerous than before the prohibition. The whole question of wages requires to be taken into the hands of the State. A compulsory labour system must be imposed. The Nazi system begins to be clearly seen by the ruling class, not merely as the ideal, but as the immediately necessary system.

So, under the euphemism of a "national wages policy", the campaign is opened, not only for the forcing down of the workers' standards, but for the destruction of the rights of the working class organisations or their alignment in a "Labour Front". The path of France is here repeated step by step, and it is no accident that the campaign against the mass of the workers is accompanied by a renewed propaganda offensive against the Communists, that is, against the vanguard of the workers' fight which can neither be corrupted nor intimidated.

There is now the possibility that organised trades might be tempted to take monopoly advantage of their essential place in the national effort to force up wages and prices. . . . Here is a problem which the Government have hitherto refused to face. A national wages policy is becoming inevitable. (*Times*, November 8th.)

Once started in a war economy, the pursuit of wages and prices is endless. To prevent it there must be control of both prices and wages. If there is to be national policy on wages it must have the highest authority and be stated by the Government. (*Times*, November 23rd.)

The question must be faced: When are these demands for wage increases going to stop? . . . The defence forces are receiving very moderate emoluments. Under such circumstances it is not right that any particular section of the nation, whether or not it is represented by a powerful trades union, should be rendered immune from all sacrifices by further increases of pay. (Sir Charles Stuart-Williams, Chairman of the Railway Stockholders' Union, December 13th.)

The coolness of this last from the representative of the railway companies stockholders, who have used the war to increase their profits by a statutory minimum of seven million pounds above pre-war to forty million pounds, and in practice by as much more again as they can get, needs no comment.

Do these measures mean in fact the imposition of a Nazi system? The *Colliery Guardian* is not afraid:

No doubt there are some who will object that if the Government assumes this responsibility it will be imitating the Nazi system. Well, there is something to be

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said for the latter. Although the repression of earning power in Germany has gone to dangerous extremes, the war-wage order in its latest forms has certainly curbed purchasing power.

And with a no less open reference Bevin declared in Glasgow:

I should be very reluctant to supersede the authority of the organised employers and unions; but if some people will not honour their agreements, or refuse to recognise their own leaders, the State will have to exercise its own authority.
But if we are driven to imitate any part of the Nazi regime, in the name of greater efficiency, it is going to be difficult to cut it out afterwards.

The controversy over the opportuneness of attempting to introduce full compulsory methods in industry at the present stage still rages in the capitalist camp; but it is a controversy over tactics, not the aim. It becomes more than ever clear that the immediate centre of the fight over the future of the people of this country, and over the future of democracy, will be fought in the factories. And the first battleground of the fight stands on the rights of the Communist Party and the militant shop stewards.

THUS the perspective of the war and of the continuance of the Government's policy begins to open out with full sharpness in the issues of the coming months. It is a perspective of a long war, of a long and destructive war, waged for aims whose reactionary character becomes increasingly manifest. It is a perspective of starvation, or rigorously imposed shortage, of a hunger-blockade exercised by both Governments simultaneously against the enemy country and against their own people. It is the perspective of the destruction of working class rights and organisation and the advance to the Nazi type of system in all the countries involved in the war. For the campaign against the workers in the factories will necessarily have its political accompaniment. Observers of all camps see the prospects of class conflicts in industry in the near future. As the resistance of the workers grows, and as the humbugging role of the Labour Ministers begins to lose its effectiveness, other methods, whether of corruption or coercion, will necessarily be brought into play. The demand for the Nazi type of system in economics and industry will be found to involve the demand for similar changes in the political sphere. The third reconstruction of the Government has now taken place. The acuteness of the crisis is reflected in the instability of the Government. The further development of the military situation may bring very sharp changes, making still more urgent the most rapid defeat of the present Government and taking over of control by the representatives of the people.

IT is against the background of this perspective that the People's Convention in January takes on its significance. The People's Convention offers the means of uniting and rallying the forces of the people in the fateful trials and decisions now in front. The assembly called for January is only the starting point. This first assembly will clearly have three main tasks. First, to adopt the common minimum programme, already indicated in the Six Points, but requiring now more specific expression, especially in respect of the urgent economic issues, and a positive economic emergency programme. Second, to lay down the lines of organisation of the movement. Third, to elect the National Committee which will have the re-

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sponsibility to lead the struggle at every stage and in all its forms for the achievement of the aims of the programme and the victory of a People's Government. Once these initial tasks have been accomplished, the greatest work begins—to build up and extend the movement in support of the Convention programme, with such strong roots in every main factory, mine, shipyard, depot and job, in every industry, in every labour organisation, and among all sections of the people, as to be capable of carrying forward the fight step by step, from smaller issues to greater issues, in face of the bankruptcy of the existing régime, to the victory of the final aims of a People's Government and a People's Peace, which can alone offer an immediate way forward from the present chaos to the beginning of the building of a new order. To these issues of the programme of the People's Convention and the method of its realisation it will be necessary to return next month in the light of the proceedings of the Convention.

R.P.D.

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The Alternative to Churchillism

BY D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

(*Hon. Treasurer of the National Committee for the People's Convention*)

THE CHURCHILL GOVERNMENT has been in power some seven months. We are told that it is our patriotic duty to support it, and to refrain even from criticising it. That claim naturally drives us to enquire into its origins, its composition and its conduct.

Its origins are pretty clear. It is surely the lineal descendant and residuary legatee of the class-government which conducted and "won" the last war, made the Treaty of Versailles, "intervened" in Russia in the hope of crushing the new-born and fortunately indestructible Socialist country, acquiesced in the rape of Manchuria, Abyssinia, Austria, Albania, and Czechoslovakia, made itself a humble and inglorious accessory before, during and after the fact to the murder of the Spanish people, steadily, persistently, and efficiently built up the power and prestige of Hitler by a series of class-conscious surrenders of which Munich was merely the most sensational, licked Mussolini's boots, and finally in the summer of 1939 rejected the opportunity of building up a secure front against aggression. (Looking back now, in the light of after events, it seems incredible that even that Government could have taken the appalling military risks involved in supporting the Poles in their refusal to admit the Red Army into Polish territory to oppose a German attack which the Polish generals were patently incapable of resisting.)

That is its pedigree in the foreign field; in its colonial and Indian policy it merely increased the prevailing misery and discontent of its subjects, and in its home policy it served us up that devil's dance of long slumps and short hectic booms, of unemployment and means tests, of political prosecutions and Trades Disputes Acts, of increased wealth and profiteering, of heightened working-class misery, that is nowadays called "Peace."

We can better judge both the character of the Government and its probable future conduct if we remind ourselves of the essential features of the twenty years between the two wars, and compare them with what might have been. In those years we were living in a world which had carried the solution of the problems of production at any rate so far that no one needed ever again to starve or to "go short", or to fight his neighbour—singly or by millions—for the means of life. It lay in our power at any time so to order the world that every one should be secure in a modest standard of living, of work and leisure, and of peace; that production should continuously expand and the standard of living soar upwards. And nowhere did the masses of the people look on the thought of war without loathing.

What was actually happening in that potential paradise? This great and wealthy country, like a good many others, was ruled by a small group of rich men, seeking their own interests—sometimes in the comfortable half-hypnotic belief that their own interests were the interests of everyone, and

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sometimes with a very clear vision and no nonsense about "the other fellow." It suited their interests—their profits and wealth and power—to restrict production, and even when production broke its leash to correct this *faux pas* by destroying the products. The artificial scarcity thus maintained—not without difficulty—was very thorough in its results. Millions, whether employed or unemployed, lived in actual starvation; even in rich Britain, drawing tribute from half the world, half the population "did not get enough to eat, of the right sort of food." As an equally direct result of the artificial scarcity, markets, particularly export markets, colonies and spheres of influence, instead of being as free as air, became vital treasures which no group of rulers could afford to surrender or abandon; on the contrary, they began arming on an unprecedented scale to take, or to prevent each other from taking, markets and colonies from rival states by force of arms. In a period when the standards of living should have been continuously rising, and war should have disappeared from the world's possibilities, the working masses were growing more wretched, and both war and preparations for war were occupying ever more and more the front of the political stage and the major part of the productive efforts of the industrial world.

In spite of this background, or in the hope that we would forget it, we were told to expect great things from this "new" Government; it was if you please something new and different, for was it not headed by Mr. Churchill, who at any rate disagreed with as much of the long history I have just given as involved the strengthening of Hitler; and did it not include several leaders of the Labour Party which had composed—I think that is the right word—the Opposition for some years? But has this new assortment of the old furniture in the old mansion really been any different from the preceding one? Very little. It has appeared somewhat less irresolute, and its leader has used far finer English than any of his rivals could compass in explaining its military and naval misfortunes; but in its attitude, programme and policy it is just the old firm at the old stand. No one can imagine that at any point where its class interests were threatened it would behave in any way differently from any of its ancestors; for example, it will no more dream of enlisting the sympathy or even diminishing the hostility of the Indian people by conceding any substantial part of their demands than its predecessors in 1917–18 would have dreamt of ending the agonies of Europe and conciliating the working-class of their own and other countries by scrapping the Imperialist secret treaties and making peace on the footing of no annexation and no indemnities.

The actual conduct of the Government in its seven months of existence presents equally little encouragement to anyone seeking a brighter world. It has given no hint that it either intends, or desires, or even knows how to build a world any better than or different from that of 1939. It persistently refuses to say what its war aims are. The sort of aim it gives us, in grandiloquent phrases, is that we are "fighting to preserve the English way of life." What is this way of life? There are many things in Britain we love and some we don't. Is it a way of life on £1,000 a week, or one on 15*s*. a week? Is it Lord Londonderry, in his country seat, still reflecting on the difficult task he achieved in retaining the bombing aeroplane in the field of modern warfare? Or is it Johnny Mason sitting among the Fascists in Ascot Camp, wondering whether he is being properly rewarded for having tried to improve the conditions of his fellow trade unionists? Or, if the "English way of life" extends to Scotland,

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is it Gorbals, or the Marquis of Bute? Or does the English way of life embrace all His Majesty's subjects, and we may then ask, is it the Indian jute worker, or Jawaharlal Nehru, or the Yules and the Cattos?

And, when we turn to see if we can deduce the Government's war aims from declarations made by its ministers or servants, we can get but little comfort from such indications as the feverish cries of Sir Robert Vansittart for the permanent subjection of the German people and the careful prophecy of Mr. Arthur Greenwood that we shall have 7,000,000 unemployed after the war; (if he were to maintain the present economic system, I suppose he is right). The wholesale "pledging" of our Imperial resources to "Uncle" Sam in return for his help in the war, which amounts to an attempt to drown unborn generations of the peoples of Britain and the Empire in a sea of perpetual indebtedness—to say nothing of helping to involve another 130,000,000 people or so in the war—is equally little encouraging as a promise of a saner future.

The Labour members of this oddly re-assorted team—a coalition government pieced together like any other coalition by the ordinary processes of party bargaining—seem for the most part to be condemned to political harakiri not merely by having voluntarily enlisted in the ranks of their class enemies at the most critical period of the class-war, in which they ought to be leading, not deserting, but also by the fact that their captors delight in giving them all the unsavoury jobs. Whenever some opposition flickers up in Parliament, it is a Labour man who has to quell it—a sort of poacher turned gamekeeper, even if they were never very good poachers. The peak of this type of humiliation was reached when Captain Margesson, Tory chief whip, the reactionary stage-manager and claque-leader who has fulfilled with admirable efficiency the function of lining up the Tory voters, willing and unwilling, behind each successive betrayal of the national interests by the National Government, was strongly attacked by a Tory member; the task of defending him, shirked apparently by every Government Tory, was undertaken with all the zeal of the convert by—Mr. Attlee! There are signs, too, that the reactionaries are plotting to use Mr. Bevin as the spearhead of that even more vigorous attack on wages and conditions which is plainly developing.

Such is our Government at a critical period of history; and it is a Government to which there is very little opposition in the House of Commons. The best parliamentary government in the world would soon become a bad one if there were not a pretty strong opposition; but so little does the Government grasp even this elementary feature of political life that it grows increasingly resentful of any opposition at all and even succeeds in forgetting that, if its immediate predecessors' similar demand for abandonment of criticism had been successful, it would never have got into office at all. (It even mixes up its political vocabulary so badly that it calls its left-wing critics "Fifth Columnist", forgetting that Fifth Columns are an exclusively ruling-class product, designed for the treacherous destruction of the left wing.)

And, whilst resenting criticism and demanding support, this Government is waging the class war zealously enough. The measures so far taken against the people's standard of living, their civil liberties and Trade Union conditions, and the forthcoming mass attack on wages; the cruel neglect of air-raid protection for the mass; the encouragement of profiteering, the sub-

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stantial consolidation of the rich in their wealth and the poor in their poverty; all these are what one expects of an ordinary class government, the warp and woof of class-war history. Only the most naïve could have expected that any feeling of patriotism would have led them to abate one jot of the rigour and ferocity with which they have learnt to fight the working-class.

The tragedy of all this is, of course, that such a Government, unless it is dislodged, has not merely the management of our lives and deaths in relation to the conduct both of the war and of the home front to-day, but is also in a position to shape the lives and deaths of future generations. It will decide—indeed, it will be automatically deciding by its policy from day to day—when and how the next world war will begin, how many Indians will die of starvation, whether all our houses will have to be built underground, whether children will be enslaved in factories, whether the continued existence of trade unions will be tolerated, and generally whether we are to live in an intensified capitalist hell or are to build for ourselves a future in which we may enjoy the fruits of the earth, instead of our oppressors making profits by burning those fruits.

The historian of the future will ask, no doubt, why we put up with it for so long. It would be too long to canvass all the reasons for a patience which will, I trust, soon be exhausted, but I might consider for a moment one point, namely the measure of success which the Government has so far achieved by concentrating on the natural feeling of ordinary thoughtful citizens that a victory of Hitler in this war would be a horrible thing for the people of Britain. "If you don't want that horror," they suggest, "then you must sacrifice everything to support us in seeking victory over those Nazis, whom we have previously encouraged and strengthened for the fight. We will accept your sacrifices with the greatest patriotism, and we will beat Hitler, unless we have made him so strong that we can't. We will make you, of course, as many promises about the better world after the war, as we did 25 years ago, and we will do just as much as we did last time—that is, nothing—to fulfil the promises and establish that better world for you". (They will not, of course, explain how they ever could build a better world without destroying their own wealth and power—which they would never do—nor will they tell us why they have fought all through the last twenty years and more, by every weapon and trick they could muster, to keep the world just as it was, beneficial to them, fatal to the happiness of the masses, and breeding war as certainly as a swamp breeds mosquitoes.)

Happily, things are not as bad as that. If they were, if we had to face the alternatives of rule by Hitler for the few years that his hectic and ill-balanced system could still hope to last, or the domination of our country in a half-ruined world by our ruling-class, victorious externally but in a state of crazy fear that would drive it to seek to protect itself by destroying anything that was left of the Labour Party, the Trade Unions, and democratic organisations and civil liberties in general, one would indeed be pessimistic. But it is plain, I think, that there is another course, and that we are not condemned to a system of eternal injustice and almost eternal warfare. The peoples of the warring countries, unanimously hating war, capable if they once acquire confidence in their own strength of moving not merely mountains but also dung-hills, can give themselves and their countries a victory that is neither Hitler's victory nor Churchill's, a victory that is no people's defeat, a victory

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of all peoples over war and over war-makers, an end of murder and of the causes of murder. It is the task of the British people to win a majority for the dislodging of *their* ruling class government; it is the task of the German people to dislodge the Nazis.

So every citizen in Britain who wants a better world can see his path pretty plain before him. If he wants to fight for better conditions now; if he wants any hope of a world not irrevocably doomed to cycles of wars and of "peace" devoted to preparing for wars; if he wants even the barest measure of social justice, he must fight this Government as he should always have been doing. He must fight it on immediate issues; he must fight it for his wages, his shelter, his coal, his food, his factory conditions, his political rights. He must fight it, too, in the longer struggle; he must fight to expel it, to instal in its place a government he can trust, a government of his own folk, a people's government, that can speak to the workers of Germany in a voice that can be trusted, that can make them offers which they can accept, and thereby end the Nazis and our ruling class, and bring in an era of peace, in which all our "way of life" can be a way that leads steadily upwards into happiness.

Such a fight needs organisation and leadership; and these are already not wanting. The movement which has led up to the calling of the People's Convention has taken a great hold in the country; it is only in its beginnings, and the Convention will herald a great development and extension of the movement. It is amusing to watch the Government and its faithful Press in relation to the new phenomenon; they are still undecided whether to treat it as a conspiracy, or a demonstration, or a political movement, whether to defame it or ignore it. But they are speedily if reluctantly being forced to realise, what thousands of people all over the country already know very clearly, that it is a living movement, deep-rooted in the industrial workers, enjoying support as well from all classes in the community, and destined to be a forerunner of great changes.

Labour Monthly
WAR PAMPHLET No. 1

"The Imperialist Struggle for a New Redivision of the World"

***By* E. VARGA**

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A.R.P. and a People's Government

BY J. B. S. HALDANE

EVEN THE MOST ardent supporters of the Government no longer pretend that the situation of Britain as regards air raids is completely satisfactory. Instead we are told that every effort is being made to remedy existing defects. Mr. Morrison is "going to it". We have only to trust him, and all will be well. His predecessors could not have been expected to foresee the results of the collapse of France. Hence the present situation. But it would be next door to treason to suggest that every possible effort was not being made.

I make two to four speeches a week on A.R.P., and as I am primarily interested in saving life, I occasionally have to defend some parts of the official policy. Thus I have to state my honest opinion that when built with mortar, as opposed to sand and lime, brick surface shelters afford more safety from bombs (if not from pneumonia) than jerry-built houses; and that it would probably be impossible to-day (though it was not impossible in September, 1938) to make underground bomb-proof shelters for almost all the inhabitants of London within a year.

But in return my audiences give me sufficient examples of how the official policy is actually carried out to make me perfectly clear that nine-tenths of the official propaganda is false. I speak of the shortage of cement, and I am shown concrete being used for private buildings in London and Newcastle, not even intended for munition production. I speak of the difficulty of making underground shelters, and I am shown an unused tunnel solidly lined with brick, considerably nearer to a South Wales factory than the brick shelter apparently intended for its unfortunate workers.

Let us examine the official excuses. We are told that daylight raids are a minor danger, and would have been a negligible one did not the Germans possess bases so close to Britain as to permit fighters to accompany their bombers and even drop bombs. This may be true, but it certainly does not apply to night raids. Liverpool is frequently raided. But Liverpool is as far from the nearest aerodrome in France as London from the nearest aerodrome in Germany. Thus if Holland, Belgium and France had never been invaded, London could be bombed as easily as Liverpool to-day. And a year ago British night bombers had flown safely over Berlin, so our authorities must have foreseen that German bombers would accomplish the far shorter flights necessary to reach British inland cities. And yet during the first year of the war Sir John Anderson's slogan was "I refuse to be hurried". And well did he carry out his principle.

To understand what has happened, we must go some way back. Logically we might well go back to 1914, when Carson, the Quisling of Ulster (or would it be more logical to say that Quisling was the Carson of Norway?) bought German arms for the purpose of civil war. Ever since then the British ruling class have allied themselves with German militarism to crush democracy

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when it suited them. Mannerheim is the Carson of Finland, Franco the Carson of Spain, and Hitler was built up to do their will against the Soviet Union.

No wonder that Sir Samuel Hoare, who as Foreign Secretary had granted Hitler the right to build submarines, refused absolutely even to begin the construction of shelters for the British people. He did plan them for himself, it is true. "An impregnable battle headquarters" was the phrase which he used to describe the official funk-hole. But for you and me, a gas-proof room was the Government's idea of safety in 1938.

They had been told, of course, that the main danger in modern air war was the high explosive bomb, with the incendiary a good second. But the people who told them had mostly damned themselves by opposing the Japanese New Order in China, or even worse, assisting the cause of parliamentary government in Spain. Even a conservative M.P., Sandys, who had the impudence to go to Barcelona and see the possibilities of modern shelter technique with his own eyes, was threatened with prosecution when he tried to reveal the gross inadequacy of the defences of London.

Nevertheless the agitation for protection grew. It was impossible to visit Republican Spain without learning two things. First that if the British Government continued to violate international law in favour of Hitler and Mussolini the same men who were bombing Barcelona would soon be bombing Britain. And secondly, that if it was possible for the people of Spain, a poor country, to make bomb-proof shelters in war, it was vastly easier to construct them in peace-time in a rich country such as Britain.

I was one of many who pointed this out. In September, 1938, the Communist Party of Great Britain adopted a programme calling for bomb-proof shelters, and has demanded them consistently ever since. Some branches of the Labour Party put forward well-thought-out local demands. The Parliamentary Labour Party set up a committee on the subject, which held a number of meetings in 1938 and 1939. Its demands were less sweeping than those of the Communists, but included the provision of bomb-proof shelters in the specially dangerous areas such as the neighbourhood of docks. Mr. Herbert Morrison and I were both members of the committee. It is a striking fact that it has held no meetings since the outbreak of war. Long before Labour members joined the Government, the party machine had shut down such activities as this, which had they been pressed might have saved thousands of lives, but would, of course, have embarrassed Sir John Anderson.

At the time of the Munich crisis a number of trenches were hurriedly dug. The official design included straight sections up to 80 feet in length, calculated to cause the maximum possible casualties should a bomb burst in one of them. They helped to make people conscious of the need for protection. Had the Government started a serious programme of bomb-proof shelter construction at this time it would have been nearing completion in the more vulnerable areas such as Central London, Birmingham and Coventry, when war broke out and would be complete by now. This is proved by such facts as the following: The Finsbury scheme for large and deep shelters holding up to 7,000 people each was both rapid and practicable. A firm of contractors agreed to make one such shelter at a cost of £10. 10*s.* per head in less than six months. The total cost of such a scheme would have been about that of one month of the present war, and it would have greatly lessened the likelihood of a German victory.

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We must therefore ask why no such programme was undertaken. Let us listen to Sir Alexander Rouse, an engineer who, after retiring from service under the Government of India, has been made chief technical adviser to the A.R.P. department of the Ministry of Home Security (so-called). On March 22, 1939, he said:

If we provide deep bomb-proof shelters for the whole nation so that people have complete protection they are going to go underground. They go underground and the war is won—but not by us. We cannot expect, as civilians, to have more protection than our soldiers and sailors.

This is an interesting reversal of former policy. On sinking transports, for example, soldiers and sailors had died in response to the order: "Women and children first to the boats". Incidentally, it shows that the present massacre of civilians is not only the policy of the German Government, but of the British Government. And it reveals the mixture of contempt and hatred with which our rulers regard the workers.

They believed that if shelters were provided, no one would go to work. Actually we know that this rarely happens. It can be argued that munition workers must inevitably take some risks. But the Government also deliberately planned to subject non-essential civilians of the working class to the same risks as soldiers and sailors.

Those who could afford it were officially urged to evacuate into the country, whilst the official evacuation schemes did not, and do not, cover more than a fraction of those civilians not engaged in essential war work. In other words, civilians not engaged on war work were deliberately exposed to bombing on a class basis. The heavy casualties in air raids, and the resulting slowing down of production, are the direct result of the hatred of our ruling class for the workers. It remains to be seen what will be their effect on the outcome of the war.

Mr. Chamberlain stated that he knew that we should not get 100 per cent production till the bombs fell. He apparently supposed that the workers whose homes had been bombed would redouble their efforts, even if they had no houses and no food. Of course, however, he did not make this statement before the bombs fell. Sir John Anderson was also cautious in his statements. While Sir Alexander Rouse was spilling the beans he stated:

The problem is a very complicated one. It has been continuously studied, and I am as anxious as anyone could possibly be to bring it to an early decision.

Sir Alexander Rouse was the principal expert consulted, and is still in office under Mr. Morrison. He is employed as a technical adviser; however his views on matters other than engineering must be very gratifying to Sir John, and may have reinforced the technical objections which he doubtless raised against the provision of bomb-proof shelters.

In 1938, then, the Government had a two-fold problem. First of all, how were they to head off the movement for the provision of adequate shelters? And secondly, how were they to turn the wide-spread anxiety concerning air raids to their own use? They solved both these political problems with great efficiency. The British Civil Service has a great tradition, going back to Dickens' Circumlocution Department and beyond, of delaying proposals uncongenial to the ruling class. This was utilised to the full. And the movement for shelters was directed into respectable channels.

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The Air Raid Defence League might have been expected, from its name and constitution, to carry out such functions as the Navy League performs. If so, it would, for example, have questioned candidates at bye-elections, and thrown its weight against those who did not pledge themselves to its very modest programme of deep shelters for the "potential target areas", to be made at a cost of about £100,000,000. But it issued a number of beautifully printed pamphlets, and did not condescend to soil its hands with politics.

Meanwhile, Sir John Anderson appointed a "Conference" of eight members whose chairman was Lord Hailey, and which included Sir Frederick Marquis, now Lord Woolton. This conference reported in April, 1938, against bomb-proof or even strongly protected shelters, except for the employees in "vital industries of a highly specialised character". By a truly remarkable coincidence, Lord Hailey was also Chairman of the Air Raid Defence League, which, a month earlier, had demanded a far larger measure of protection. It is not surprising that the League did not press too strongly a policy to which its Chairman was opposed. I pointed out the ambiguity of Lord Hailey's position, and soon afterwards he resigned his post. But he had done his work. The League served to canalise the activities of a number of well-meaning people into directions which could not embarrass Sir John Anderson.

The report of the Hailey Conference is interesting reading today. Large shelters, which alone can be made bomb-proof at reasonable cost, were rejected on the ground that "it would be wrong to count on movements exceeding 300 yards by day or 150 yards by night." To-day Londoners travel for miles daily to reach shelter. Lord Woolton, who shares the responsibility for the error of judgment which has cost so many lives, but gave such valuable support to Sir John Anderson, is now entrusted with the even more vital task of watching over our food supply.

But if the Government was able to head off the movement for bomb-proof shelters, it could and did use the movement for Air Raid Defence for a concerted attack on democracy. In many cases the control of A.R.P. has been effectively taken out of the hands of local authorities, and placed in that of Chief Constables or other "safe" persons. Everywhere the local authorities have to deal not with the Ministry of Home Security, which is at least subject to Parliamentary criticism, but with the Regional Commissioners, who do not have to answer either parliamentary or local critics, and who have already gone some way to merit their title of the Twelve Dictators. And the capitalist press continually cries for more dictators to override the inefficient local authorities.

Actually the majority of such deep underground shelters as have been excavated or substantially improved in the last two years have been made by such local authorities as those of Ramsgate, Luton, and Easington, in the teeth of Government opposition. Doubtless some local authorities need gingering up. In a Merseyside town the Chairman of the Emergency Committee replied to my criticism of the dangerous and insanitary shelters for which he was responsible by a discourse on the dangers of inflation, which would become serious, he said, were more money spent on them. But I think that in four cases out of five the initiative has come from below, and the obstruction from above.

When war broke out, Sir John Anderson still refused to be hurried. I

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choose one example out of many. I am Chairman of the A.R.P. Co-ordinating Committee, a body which has been in existence since April, 1938, and consists mainly of architects, engineers, doctors, teachers, and others with expert knowledge of technical matters connected with A.R.P. Up to the outbreak of war this body had worked for deep underground shelters almost everywhere. But when the war came we realised the urgency of the problem, and in November, 1939, we suggested to Sir John Anderson that surface shelters should, where possible, be so designed that they could later be so heavily protected as to be safe against direct hits from quarter-ton bombs, and relatively invulnerable by still heavier bombs.

It was not till June, 1940, that he admitted, in the House of Common, that his previous refusal to allow this type of shelter to rank for grant had been "based on an erroneous view". But meanwhile the harm had been done, and millions of people are compelled to use brick shelters which cannot be strengthened except at an exorbitant cost in labour and materials. The consequences of this policy are written in the blood of tens of thousands of British men, women and children.

The position to-day is as follows: Deep underground shelters are entirely feasible in a great many areas where there are outcrops of any but the hardest rocks: quarries, cliffs, or other suitable sites. There are tens of thousands of miners waiting to make them. Where the rock is soft or wet, a lining is needed. But this requires less bricks than do surface shelters holding the same number of people. In a few areas galleries could be built at the foot of mine tips or slag heaps, and later covered by shovelling slag or rock on top of them. These types would, however, only protect a fraction of the population. They could not be made in a hurry in most parts of London, except perhaps in and near Lewisham, where there is chalk near the surface. On the other hand, further tunnels could be dug out fairly rapidly from the London Tube Stations. The A.R.P. Co-ordinating Committee suggested this measure in August, 1938. Mr. Morrison is now asking the advice of experts on it, but refuses to be hurried.

For most of the vulnerable areas surface shelters could be built so as to be later made bomb-proof. In some cases the design of the A.R.P. Co-ordinating Committee, the so-called Haldane Shelter, might be suitable. Where many houses have been wrecked, and vast quantities of rubble are available, a design such as that proposed for Hackney, where the roof is largely protected by rubble, might be better. Meanwhile private shelters and suitable parts of steel frame buildings should be taken over. There is no space even to indicate the measures needed to deal with such problems as those of evacuation, rehousing, compensation, medical services, and many more.

Why, it may be asked, should we not trust Mr. Morrison to "Go to it"? The answer is two-fold. In the first place he has so far shown little signs of doing so. His first speech attributed the demand for deep shelters to mischievous political reasons. It is hard to attribute deep political motives to the tens of thousands of London mothers who vote for deep shelters with their feet every evening by taking their children to the tubes, or to ascribe such motives to the miners of Easington, who are not merely asking for them, but excavating them. And today bricks and mortar are being wasted by making brick shelters at the very foot of cliffs which could be rapidly tunnelled.

Secondly, even if Mr. Morrison were an enthusiastic advocate of every

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measure of protection which has so far been suggested by experts, he would be unable to carry them out in his present position. He is surrounded by the civil servants and experts who were assembled to carry out the policy of Sir John Anderson. The previous quotation from Sir Alexander Rouse shows that their rejection of strong shelters was not merely based on technical, but on political grounds.

In other words, Anderson's delays were not due to incompetence, but were a deliberate part of the Chamberlain policy. Chamberlain has gone to his own place, as St. Peter said in a similar context, but the evil that he did lives after him, and many of the men whom he chose are still with us. On December 5, 1940, Captain Balfour, the Under-Secretary for Air, speaking on A.R.P., said that to-day no one was interested in moans or complaints. This statement, though perhaps slightly exaggerated, is a substantially correct account of the official A.R.P. policy. So long as Chamberlain's and Anderson's nominees are charged with our defence, and display no interest in criticism, we can hope for no real improvement.

A People's Government would tackle the matter on very different lines. Officials responsible for "erroneous views" which have cost thousands of lives would be sacked. The miners would be mobilised to make deep shelters where this is immediately possible. The principal bottle-neck in the supply of materials is at present the cement industry. This would be taken over by the State. At present it is controlled by Lord Wolmer, a director of one of the principal cement companies. In view of an impending libel action I can do no more than refer readers to the fourth report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure for an opinion on the evil character of such appointments as this.

The attitude of the Ministry of Home Security can be judged from the following fact. As a member of a recent deputation to this Ministry, I referred to the use of slag as a component of cement, and the possibility of increasing output by its use. The Civil Servant who was receiving the deputation stated that he had never heard of the process in question, and asked for information on it. It is, of course, well known to engineers.

Local authorities would be encouraged to show initiative, and would only be superseded in those rather rare cases where they have refused to exercise the moderate powers allotted to them. The worst offenders are certain county councils, whose delaying action could be short-circuited by allowing urban and rural district councils to make their own shelter schemes. The fullest use would be made of spontaneous popular bodies such as shelter committees. A number of temporary measures would be necessary, such as the ruthless commandeering of steel frame and concrete buildings in target areas not used for vital national purposes, and of a number of admittedly inadequate private shelters which are, however, far better than nothing.

Given the will, the problem could be solved fairly rapidly, as it was in many Spanish cities. But to-day the will is not there. Nor will it be there until a wholesale clearance has been made of the men who are responsible for the present ghastly situation, and are still continuing the policy which led up to it. Only a Government representing the People rather than vested interests can supply the necessary will.

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The Attack on the Workers

BY HARRY ADAMS

(*Chairman of the National Committee for the People's Convention*)

I AM often asked why I support the People's Convention. The answer is that I am deeply concerned at the consistent attempts to weaken the organisations of the working-class and their standards of life. I have tried to set out below the issues as I see them.

The working class have reached a turning point. That much is clear from recent events. Wages policy is in the melting-pot. Signs of the approaching conflict have been visible for a long time. The issue has now been brought to a head by the flat rejection of the engineers' claim for an increase in wages. The claim was turned down, not because the industry cannot afford to pay, but on the grounds that it would not be in the national interest to increase wages at the present time. Moreover, in rejecting the claim, the spokesman for the engineering employers implied that their attitude was part of a new national policy towards wage applications.

What is new and dangerous is the rejection of the claim on the grounds that in the national interest employers were against any further wage increases. The reply of the employers was given on November 3rd. A few days later, *The Times* came forward with a declaration that a "national wage policy is becoming inevitable". The leading article goes on to say:

> Industry requires guidance in the next step. If ability to pay is to be the measure of wage increases, then until the purchaser—that is to say, the Government—takes a firm stand, the war industries can demand what they like. So great is the issue that it should not be left to any body of employers, nor indeed to employers at all, to lay down the principles which should in war-time govern wage advances. . . . Leadership must come from elsewhere and the Ministry of Labour . . . should endeavour to supply what is lacking. (8.11.40.)

Since then a press campaign has developed around this theme. And here we should remember that last summer the Trades Union Congress and the British Employers' Confederation signed a declaration which said:

> The machinery of negotiation existing in any trade or industry for dealing with questions concerning wages and conditions of employment shall continue to operate. Matters in dispute which cannot be settled by means of such machinery shall be referred to arbitration for a decision which shall be binding on all parties, and no strike or lock-out shall take place.

It will be recognised that the T.U.C. made big concessions, on the understanding that the normal methods of negotiation would go on as before, despite the fact that the unions had sacrificed the freedom to enforce their claim by striking.

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Many concessions were made as was indicated by Mr. Ernest Bevin in his speech to the T.U.C. at Southport. Referring to the special conference of trade union executives held at the Central Hall, Westminster, shortly after Labour joined the Government, he said:

> We had to ask you to agree to what was virtually a restriction of many of the liberties that you have enjoyed. We had to ask highly skilled unions to give up their treasured rights. We had to ask that demarcation disputes should be put on one side. We had to ask for training on a scale which, when carried to its completion, would be far greater than that adopted in the last war.

It would seem that the British Employers' Confederation, having achieved a certain weakening of trade union standards, has now decided to press home its advantage by seeking to turn overboard "the machinery of negotiation . . . for dealing with questions concerning wages and conditions". The whole process recalls a statement made by Mr. Ernest Bevin in *The Record*, in December, 1938:

> The tactics of the governing class in England in dealing with such matters as these never change. Their attitude is to break down opposition by degrees and to lead on from one stage to another.

That seems to be following the traditional policy of the employers, but is now made easier for them by virtue of the surrender of "their treasured rights" by the Unions.

One of the main arguments now being put forward against wage increases is advanced by the Hon. R. H. Brand, banker, director of Lazard Bros., and Lloyds Bank, in an article in *The Times* (14.11.40). He likens the total amount of goods available for consumption to a huge plate of soup:

> To raise salaries or wages does not add one spoonful to the soup. All that it means is that any section of the population which gets its wages raised has for the moment a larger spoon and will be able to get more while others get less.

Undoubtedly this is the familiar Keynes argument dressed up in a new form. The workers may well ask: if the soup-plate argument is correct, why does the Government allow millions of pounds more to be paid out in dividends, thus giving the shareholders larger soup spoons? When the workers go forward in a general movement to maintain wage standards, what they are really asking is not only that their spoons shall be large enough, but that there shall be enough soup to go round. It is not the experience of the Labour movement that if an advance in real wages is secured in one industry it leads to a fall in standards elsewhere because "there is only so much to go round". Rather has a victory for one section of workers in the past strengthened the hand of the unions and weakened the resistance of the employers throughout industry.

Another type of argument is that which appears in a recent statement by a manager of the main line railways (20.11.40) that if wage increases were granted to railwaymen the companies would immediately insist on further rises in fares.

Moreover, wages policy will also be affected by the very drastic cuts in the amount of goods allowed for consumption, which are tending to raise prices and reduce real wages. Already supplies of most goods to the shops are com-

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pulsorily restricted to a percentage of their former orders. In announcing these changes, Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, President of the Board of Trade, said:

Consumers are being asked to do without luxuries, and, indeed, some things which our high standard of life has led us to regard as nearly necessities. I feel absolutely confident that they will gladly accept these sacrifices.

These restrictions are introduced because of the unwillingness of British capitalists to spend more dollars and labour than they must on the production of necessities for the workers. Those workers who become unemployed as a result, e.g., in the textile and clothing trades, do not at once find new jobs on munitions work or training: indeed the Board of Trade admits that so far only "two-thirds of the labour displaced" has been re-employed "reasonably quickly" in war industry. Unemployment and short time is now rapidly increasing in Lancashire in particular. The *Financial News* (21.11.40) describes the new cuts as "vicious and arbitrary".

The new Order . . . is calculated to render many more Lancashire people unemployed or under-employed long before the war industries are able to absorb them. . . . Eventually half Lancashire may be required to work directly for war needs. Meanwhile, however, Lancashire and every other consumer goods manufacturing centre should be going "all out" adding to our stocks of such goods until the war industries are ready for their workers.

Further restrictions in imports of food, especially meat and fruit, are now announced. (*The Times*, 29.11.40.)

A shortage is being deliberately created. To go back once again to Mr. Brand's simile, day by day less soup is doled into the plate for the workers.

The employers are now working out various lines of attack on the real wages of the workers. For example, proposals are once again afoot to introduce an "iron ration" cost-of-living index, based on the price of a very small range of rationed goods; according to this scheme prices of all other goods could then be raised without causing any rise in the index or the wages regulated by it. This argument was used by the engineering employers. In their rejection of the union's claim, they refused to include indirect taxation increases as part of the general rise in the cost of living, declaring that since "Parliament in its wisdom" has imposed these taxes, the workers have no right to pass on the burden to their employers. The low rates of pay in the armed forces were also used as an argument against wage increases for engineers. We should indeed demand an increase of pay for men in the armed forces; 90 per cent are workers in uniform any way.

The plans of the employing class cannot be achieved unless they can hamstring the Trade Unions. The point is put with brutal clearness by the *Colliery Guardian* recently. Writing of the need for a "national wages policy" this organ of the coalowners says:

No doubt there are some who will object that if the Government assumes this responsibility it will be imitating the Nazi system.
Well, there is something to be said for the latter.

This view of the coalowners should be considered in the light of recent happenings in the House of Commons. On December 5th, eight days after Mr. Ernest Bevin had declared he was against conscription of labour, Sir

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John Anderson was put up to reply to the debate, and this is what he said:

Ordinarily, when the Government decided whether or not they were going to apply compulsion, to compel a civilian to go to a particular job, or remain in it, they did not contemplate making themselves responsible in the same way as they did for the soldier, for all the consequences. *That was not to say that compulsion would not be applied in the case of civilian labour where it was the best and most appropriate method.* We might have to apply it in tackling the vitally important and most urgent task of reconstruction in the industrial areas that have been subjected to very heavy aerial attack, but it should be applied after a full consideration of all the facts.

Clearly there are two voices in the Government. A few days after Sir John Anderson spoke, Mr. Bevin decided to raise the age of reservation of 17 grades of electrical workers to 35 . . . And this is what the Industrial Editor of the *Daily Express* (9.12.40) had to say about this action of the Minister of Labour:

Mr. Ernest Bevin comes nearer industrial conscription in an experiment he starts to-day than at any time since he was given control of the nation's man power six months ago. This experiment may be expanded to cover millions of men who believe they will be exempt from service in the armed forces for the period of the war. There is a shortage of skilled electricians in the forces and in industry. Mr. Bevin has decided on a share-out of the skilled men available.

In my capacity as a trade union officer, I know that considerable difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the release of skilled men from the army to carry out the necessary war damage repair work; and taken in conjunction with the employment of men enrolled in the pioneer corps on debris clearance, one is tempted to assert that the Government would prefer that skilled operations should be carried out at army rates of pay rather than by skilled craftsmen at the normal trade union rates of pay.

Can there be any doubt which is the effective voice in the Government? The whole experience of this Government since Labour joined it is one of constant adjustment of labour policy to meet the needs of big business. A danger point has been reached. Capital is consolidating its position at the expense of the workers. That is the issue confronting the workers to-day, and because I recognise the need for re-vitalising the organs of struggle of the working-class, particularly the trade unions, to meet the menace of our living standards, and because I refuse to accept the position that the struggle on the industrial field can cease because of the war situation, I support the People's Convention.

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Victory for What?

BY IVOR MONTAGU

THE less Churchill says, the more noble his oratory is declared to be. For example (24.10.40): ". . . For the morning will come. Brightly will it shine on the brave and true, kindly upon all who suffer for the cause [which?] *Vive la France!* Long live also the forward march of the common people towards their just and true inheritance [how much?], and towards the broader and fuller age" [where, when and how?].

Such words are made for applause, like the sunsets of the Welsh Wizard during the last world war, but when the banquet is done they afford poor nourishment to those in whose minds rise the queries we have interpolated.

Similar wind recurs in all the perorations: "Liberty and opportunity and hope" (Eden, 14.3.39); "honourable freedom . . . just dealing between the nations" (Halifax, 31.8.39); "civilised methods in international relations . . . the freedom of national peoples, great and small" (MacDonald, 21.9.39); "a quite simple principle, that of liberty" (Greenwood, 20.9.39); "decencies and liberties" (Attlee, 11.7.40); "to be able to live our own lives as we like . . . to worship God as we like" (Halifax, 25.7.40); "not solely . . . for democracy, but over and above that in a crusade for the maintenance of those religious principles which we were taught as children by our mothers . . ." (Gort, 4.8.40).

There is a certain variation, from the incautious universals of MacDonald, Greenwood and Halifax (16.11.39: "the rights of *all* nations to live their own lives . . . against the violation of the sanctity of treaties and disregard for the pledged word"—*our italics;* this, by the way, is from the gentleman who proposed at Geneva the recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia and who declared that Britain had no obligation—under the Covenant—to defend Czechoslovakia) to the caution and limitation of Churchill (1.10.39, endorsing the words of Chamberlain: "to enable *the Peoples of Europe* to preserve their independence and their liberties", and of Attlee (11.7.40: "to establish a free and peaceful *Europe*"—*our italics again*). But, in general, one is left the impression that the variety in these phrases is accounted for more by the quality of the wine than by any other cause, and that they are alike in intention as they certainly are in effect, *viz.*, to carry positively no commitment (and no meaning) of any kind whatsoever.

Nevertheless, is it so very difficult to find out what lies behind? The "New Order" that the Anglo-American coalition proposes to establish by force of arms is, in fact and already, taking shape as simply and as concretely as that of Adolf Hitler.

Only look at it.

Poland. The so-called government here is maintained by the subsidies, as well as legal sanctions overriding British law, which it receives from the British Government. The latter has, therefore, a direct responsibility for its every act. Its members, none of them ever endorsed by a free and democratic vote in Poland, exercise life and death powers over male Poles in British

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territories (by conscripting them and subjecting them to their version of martial law).

Old in anti-Semitism before Hitler was born, its press denounces "Jewish influence in the British Government" and voices anti-Semitic sentiments in its paper published in England.

The "socialists" in it are those who distinguished themselves for nobility and courage by passing a resolution approving the seizure by their government of Teschen at the time of Munich, and then writing to the Labour and Socialist International to explain that they had to do so or else they would have been put in gaol. It is a government which declares itself at war with the U.S.S.R. (but not with Italy, who is engaged in attacking the ally—the British Government—to which they owe existence), presumably to recover territories which every political commentator for twenty years, from the *Daily Herald* to Curzon and the Versailles Council of Ambassadors, agreed should never have been a part of Poland. Their declared war aim and ambition: a Poland bounded by "the Baltic . . . the Oder . . . the Sudeten Mountains . . . the Moravian gates and the Carpathians . . . the Dniester and the Black Sea . . . the Dnieper . . . the Dvina"; "the lands of her cultural and living space . . . 1,000,000 square kilometres"; whereas "the Poland of 1939 possessed only about 390,000 square kilometres"; "we must firmly take under our rule the Baltic Sea with East Prussia . . . we must find the way to get the people of Eastern Poland to fight Moscow's barbarism and the pest of Bolshevism". (*Dziennek Polski*, November, 1940.)

Czechoslovakia. This so-called government also is maintained by British governmental subsidy and is therefore an unescapable British Government responsibility. It is also granted the power of conscription; refugees from Czechoslovakia are faced with the alternative of submitting to the orders of its reactionary officers or rotting in gaol. The members of the government are of two kinds: those who betrayed the trust and will, democratically expressed, of the Czechoslovak people when these desired to defend their independence with arms, but when their Anglo-French masters bid them betray; and those who found it possible to transform the Social Democratic party on the instructions of Hitler's governor and serve in his puppet government until well after the outbreak of war. The Sudeten "Socialists" stand aside, split into those who desire to bring the Sudetens back under Benes, and those who wish to keep them under a Germany to be ruled by Rauschning and Strasser.

Elected parliamentary representatives of the only non-racial party in Czechoslovakia, the Communists, are arrested and gaoled while the so-called "democratic government" concludes alliance with Polish foreign policy, assigns to the German people "responsibility for the terrible crimes of Nazi Germany", and proposes "considerably strengthened" influence of the Catholic Church, which collaborates with Mussolini and Hitler and exhorts Franco to his monstrous crimes. (*Czechoslovak*, November, 1940.)

France. The press and publicists are warned against criticising Pétain, traitor, fascist, destroyer of French liberties and would-be eradicator of all traces of the Revolution of 1789. The subsidised De Gaullists, comically named "Free French", like all fascists and reactionaries make "abstention from politics and factionalism" the excuse for suppression of all influence of the Popular Front. The bunch of decadents and wealthy wirepullers in his

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offices parallels exactly the bunch around Pétain. The label "freeing of the French" is accorded to action whereby, with or without arms, a handful of whites transfers the resources and the dumb, bound, and unconsulted native population of a colony from one "crusade" to the other.

Portugal. The fascist Salazar, who has maintained his people in abject poverty, his treasure in good standing with its foreign countries, and his empire at the disposal of British businessmen is described as the ruler of a "state of model order"—"model" no doubt for the future order for every state in Europe if these business men have their way.

Spain. The pitiful and incapable sadist Franco, with a million in gaol, executing—by his friends' admission—*hundreds daily*, of the people he has subdued, shattered and starved, is courted and flattered by Halifax, who dribbles of the undying admiration of the British, and the conformity to British tradition, of such a régime (*acta non verba*, this is the evidence of what Halifax means by "honourable liberty" and "freedom to worship" when he asks the British people to fight for it). While the British and American mouthpieces insist that no food shall go to German-occupied territory, since—as they say—starving people rebel more readily and therefore to feed Hitler's victims is to fortify Hitler's rule, both British and American Governments tumble over themselves to supply grain, oil, all kinds of stuffs and the credit to purchase them in the hope of staving off the fall of Franco's tottering tyranny.

Greece. The dictator Metaxas, who broke his oath to seize the government with scarce a dozen to support him in parliament, destroyed all vestige of freedom and trace of democratic institution, and chained his opponents naked to a cement floor, is alluded to as the heir to Pericles and the tradition of the two thousand years humanities for which "we" fight, the perfect answer to the democratic maiden's prayer.

Rumania. The latest microphone adjunct to the "democratic crusade to create new Europe" is the ambassador who for years in London served the monarch who shot down strikers, thrust liberals in dungeons, murdered his opponents in their cells, abolished parliament, tolerated the persecution of the Jews, sanctioned wholesale corruption and embezzlement, ground down his people with taxes for "defence", exported tidy and convenient nest-eggs to safe spots abroad, and then—abandoned his country.

Germany. While Archbishops call for a "settlement that is in part penal . . . the German nations . . . reconstitution as they were before the time of Bismarck . . . for a time garrisoned by the Allies" (York, 17.10.40); while favours are showered on the gangster and Nazi founder, Otto Strasser, Rauschning—stained with complicity in every crime of Hitler's against his people, Thyssen—sponsor and financier of Hitler, Otto Hapsburg—scion of decadent medievalism, Starhemberg—assassin of Austrian democracy and whose artillery fire mowed down Austrian working men, women and children, now enjoying the rank and emoluments of an Air Force officer; while the mock "revanche" government of Czechoslovakia is encouraged to write "till now we have not seen any really serious attempt at resistance against Nazi terrorism from any section of the German people . . ." (*Czechoslovak*, November, 1940)—refugees from or fighters against that terror who fall into the clutches of the British Government are jailed unless they

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undertake to support the latter "in all circumstances", i.e., to support a blank cheque for the settlement "in part penal" against their people.

In Italy the flattery of the Balbos and Badoglios, accomplices of Italian fascism from fullest choice or else from craven wickedness, shows the similar destiny of "pliant" leadership in dream-store for the Italian people.

The U.S.S.R. Here also, all is sufficiently clear, there is no mystery. The careful endeavour to preserve a series of running sores around the Soviet frontiers. A note, refusing to recognise "changes brought about by force", designed to cover the case of the return to U.S.S.R. of Bessarabia, recognised by the British Government after the last war as seized by Rumania without even the signature of a treaty by the latter with the sovereign State from which it was seized! Subsidy to the Polish Government, to pursue its war against U.S.S.R. with the aim of "finding a way to get the people of Eastern Poland to fight". Refusal to help mediate and end hostilities in Finland or "accept" —a fine admission that—the Finnish peace. Refusal to recognise the overwhelming and unchallengeable desire of the Baltic peoples to incorporate themselves in the U.S.S.R.—what impudence, people voting to decide their own destiny!

Offer to recognise the incorporation "*de facto*"—which is diplomatic language for "I can't do anything about it to-day because I'm not strong enough, but I don't say *de jure* because thereby I reserve the right to kick you out later if ever I have the chance". And with what object? The Imperial Policy Group Memorandum for December tells us that President Roosevelt "recently" informed a delegation claiming to represent American Lithuanians:

> Lithuania did not lose her independence—Lithuania's independence was only temporarily set aside. Time will come and Lithuania willl be free again. This will happen much sooner than you may expect.

This is a case, concludes the Memorandum, "in which the English-speaking world can make far-reaching proposals illustrating our attitude to modern European problems in reconciling nationality, and the natural trend to form large politico-economic units."

The proposals—well:

> A politico-economic group of the *Baltic*, and Scandinavian countries and Finland . . . in which foreign and military policies are co-ordinated to the fullest extent, in which the countries concerned adopt a collective policy for the co-ordination of transport, and marketing . . . brought into the sterling and dollar systems . . . and, most important of all, "linking" a purely non-aggressive policy, especially in naval matters, with that of the United States and British Commonwealth.

"The right to guide the course of world history is the noblest prize of victory", declares Churchill (20.8.40), playing with the bubble about to burst in his hands as grandiloquently as Chaplin's figure of Hitler in the film.

The course he destines for Europe, if that prize should ever be his, could not be more clear.

The pygmy rubbish about "War by Revolution" (behind the banners of British capital!), about the "Hundred Million Allies", who were to step into the breach left vacant by the unwillingness of the destined Soviet catspaw to collect the chestnuts, about Churchill's unrivalled chance to lead the humble and downtrodden of the world to revolt, the story spread invitingly before them by Laski in *Picture Post*—all this rubbish is seen for what it is in face of

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the facts of the Anglo-American New Order being brought swiftly and unhesitatingly into being behind the fog of chatter.

Of the two styles in "war-support writings" for Labour men, that of general noble blather (Gollancz: "Victory and Progress", Strachey; "Truth and Love"—*Left News*, November, 1940) is by far the safer. Particularisation is discredited by the event almost before the ink is dry that records it. Let us examine some examples.

Was not this a war for the freedom of workers' organisations? George Hicks, who exhibited his erudition at a recent trial, was in no doubt:

> Fundamentally this is a workers' war, for the right to organise, to freely associate, to give voice to their needs and hopes and aspirations, and to exert their democratic power to remedy their wrongs, redress their grievances and effect improvements in their conditions. (8.8.40.)

And is it not Labour men who, as ministers, have cancelled these rights, detained workers without charge or trial for endeavouring to exercise them, and allege that workers who raise voice against them do so at Hitler's order?

Was this not a war to curb the profiteer? "We must be on guard," said Herbert Morrison, "against the false prophets who confuse freedom with the economic power of every little exploiter to do what he likes with his own." (7.12.39). And was it not Morrison himself who, as Minister of Supply, accelerated the process whereby exploiters have, by their posts in the supply boards, been endowed with the opportunity to do what they like with other peoples' as well as their own. (Perhaps there is no inconsistency here. Those given free rein are *big* exploiters.)

Was this not a war against fascism itself? And has not the *Daily Herald* actually swallowed even Metaxas, who emerges from the maw of its infinitely extensible conscience with the label "dictator, maybe, but enlightened"?

Was not India to be an "acid test"? In the mouths of how many canting labour hypocrites who denounced those who opposed the war, was not India to be a touchstone? To-day the acid of this chosen test has bitten deep through the dross of the "democratic" façade to their swindling war aims. Nehru, Mrs. Naidu, and a host of others are thrust behind bars, but they do not lose a wink of sleep.

This was not to be a war for Empire. But "Labour" continues undisturbed in the war cabinet without a pipe of protest, while Churchill declares that he fights for "survival for the British Empire . . . survival for all that the British Empire has stood for" (13.5.40). *All that the British Empire has stood for*, including in its West Indian colonies a state of affairs so monstrous it dare not publish its own commission's report upon it (and Citrine, so glib on the evils of Soviet socialism, keeps his diary of it hidden). *All that the British Empire has stood for*, that blot on the name of the British people which a generation who founded the Labour party, and preceded these renegade ministers, had pledged themselves to remove.

We fight for such a "New Order" says Duff Cooper (7.10.40) as is embodied in our "Commonwealth", "based on no nonsense about one race being superior to all the others, but on the sound foundation of a fair deal being given to all races and all creeds". ("*Fair Deal*", i.e. fivepence a head per week income, fivepence a head per year for education, and no vote.) And Attlee obediently echoes (3.9.39): "The British Commonwealth of Nations

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shows how it is possible to have unity with diversity, and to bring together people of different races and languages while preserving the freedom of all." ("*Unity with Diversity*"—a practical illustration from Bevin: stop calling coloured seamen lascars, that's unity; but don't equalise their wages or war bonuses, that would do away with the diversity.)

This was not to be a war to "crush the enemy". "We do not wish to destroy the German people, whose scholars, writers, musicians, democratic leaders and others have made such noble contributions to that European civilisation which Hitler seeks to destroy." (Greenwood, 3.9.40.) And what party contributed to the cabinet by whose orders were jailed, and provided the man by whom are kept in jail, those of their "scholars, writers, musicians, democratic leaders and others" that they could lay their hands on? What party provided the Dalton ("Good old Bottomley" was the shout at Bournemouth) who led the chorus trying to assign "war-guilt" to the German people? What party with its leadership tolerates the denunciation of the German people as blood-guilty of fascism, while it sits side by side with men in the cabinet who *built up Hitler, strengthened and supported Hitler, condoned and even* praised his every crime, persecuted his opponents—and who would do it again rather than see the German people themselves in power.

This was not to be a war wasted, but one from which was to emerge a Federation of Democracies, of which Anglo-American collaboration was to be the sample. Yesterday Strachey, Brailsford, and Laski echoed at such a prospect the joys that were expressed by the dollar millionaires, who include the capital expenditure on their new factories in the prices they charge for the product delivered to the British Government "to aid democracy". To-day the U.S.A. stands exposed in firm reality, forcing its way to the domination of every part of the American continent and the elimination of every popular democratically supported movement there—whether in Mexico, Chili or Cuba.

To-day the farce of bourgeois democracy has been more brilliantly illuminated in its American sample than ever before—two parties with a single programme, and any opposition ruled off the ballot, jailed, intimidated, and sentenced to ten-year stretches.

> That the American electorate is being cheated of an opportunity to decide its foreign policy in this election is obvious and on the record—a unique dictatorship, one in which two parties go through the motions of opposing each other . . . Willkie has not only accepted the president's foreign policy, he has also adopted his domestic program. (Uncensored journal of Barnes, Chase, Flynn, Grattan, Howe, Pascoe and Villard, 28.9.40.)

Yesterday Laski was discoursing learnedly on a distinction he had invented between "expanding" imperialists (Nazi and fascist), and "contracting" imperialisms (British); the latter, being in decline, were loosening up and therefore, a "lesser evil", fit for socialist and anti-imperialist support. To-day the imperialism that was "contracting" has assembled already in the interim far more territory and population than Hitler has in the same period collected (Dutch empire—title deeds: the person of the Queen. Belgian empire—title deeds: the King missing, so make do with the Premier and Spaak, whose temporary desertion—testified by Jaspar—can conveniently be ignored. Bits of French empire—title deeds: "Freedom", expressed in 1 in 1,000 of the

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population, privileged by colour, deciding on which side freedom lies). The "loosening up" of the same Empire has been beautifully demonstrated by the calling in of American arms to police it (what say have the inhabitants been given, in either colony or nominal "Dominion" (Newfoundland) respecting the cession of the bases?); by the increasing grip of American finance capital throughout its extent (by the cession of holdings for credits); and particularly the encouragement of American investment in India, where the Indian people will shortly be presented—as obstacle to their independence—not only with the old British vested interests (which have already bled out many times their value in tribute) but with new American vested interests.

Again, this was not to be a war wasted at home, but one that was to produce "social justice". Chatterer Laski, inventing the formula "dynamic of democracy" (to replace the Webbs' theoretical justification for the reformist attitude in the last war, the rather flyblown "inevitability of gradualness"), explained that while it was true that the privileged classes had always, in every bourgeois democracy so far, broken up democracy when its "dynamic" looked like threatening their privilege, this time in Britain the Labour ministers had at last the chance, by the exercise of "tact", of reversing the process, of securing at least "symbolical concessions". "On no other assumption can a free man either think or write to-day". Said ministers have already replied to him, in the person of Bevin, followed at a few days' distance by Morrison, by abandoning, in open declaration, the aspiration not only towards socialism (the specific form) but even towards "social justice" (the most general and indefinite form possible)! The open declaration now is for "*Social Security*", which, without socialism, with retention of inequality, is simply the contentment of the slave. It is the identical slogan of every pseudo-fascist and catholic demagogue, the "hierarchy" conception of Pétain, Weygand and Franco!

Here is the definition of this new objective of the labour movement, the war aim of Labour, as pronounced by its author to an audience of business men:

> That does not mean that all profits or surpluses would be wiped out, but it does mean that the whole of your economy, finance, organisation, science, and everything would be directed together to social security, not for a small middle class or for those who may be mere possessors of property, but for the community as a whole.
>
> (Bevin, at a Rotary Club lunch, 20.11.40.)

> . . . The limits within which interests may operate will be laid down by the Government, and . . . those limits will be the welfare of the nation as a whole . . . Profit can be made provided that the activity encircles the nation as well as the individual.
>
> (Mosley, in "Fascism in Britain".)

The identity of aim is not coincidental, it is inevitable.

There is one point of view from which it is common prudence not to reveal war aims. This is the viewpoint of the simple swindle. In the last war, for example, "our" war aims included Palestine for the Arabs, Palestine for the Jews, Palestine for the French, Palestine for the Italians, Palestine for "us". "*Us*" got it, and all the promissory notes around have been causing trouble ever since.

Would the British worker fight for a Europe and a world dominated by feudal and fascist puppets whose condition of existence is to be participation in the sterling-dollar bloc on the basis of no barrier against Anglo-American

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trade exploitation? No, but maybe he will for "federation—national independence, embodied in larger economic units."

Would the British worker fight for a Britain dominated by big business, in which every path to protest is closed? No, but maybe he will for "security—fair profit and social peace."

Let the labour leaders do their part with the cackle, while *WE* get on with the domination.

The foundations of the imperialist world-after-the-war are being fast laid down before the cannon-smoke has yet died away or the issue of its leadership been yet decided. Why is it that the fine phrases of the Labour leaders each, in their realisation, prove to have this concrete character underneath? Because of the *class* nature of policy. Because, if you turn your back upon the class struggle, because if for any reason—whether driven by rubber truncheon or cajoled by illusion of "national unity"—you ally yourself with the class that wields power in the imperial state, by that alliance you speed the wheels of realisation of that policy of exploitation with which its continued existence is bound up. Hence all "acid tests" must turn to water, all fine words die on the wind. If you will not fight monopoly capital, you must play its game.

Hence the perspectives of the Churchill-Roosevelt victory, *as they take shape*, grow more and more to resemble the perspectives of Hitler's new order; the same men toiling, the same men in jail, the same men as puppet viceroys; only the apex of the pyramid, the name of the firm, is different.

The "objects" so oft proclaimed are not ignoble. They are rightly cherished by all, *they can be won*. All of them—freedom, national independence, lasting peace, collaboration between nations, an end to national hatred, working-class organisation, the use of resources for the people's good, respect for humanity, liberation of enslaved peoples. . . . They can be won by victory. *But not by the victory of any bloc of those whose power in this present age is incompatible with the realisation of any of these ideals.*

They can be won only by the victory of the people precisely *over* those in whose mouths they are nothing but dust and deception. By the victory of socialism, which can be achieved only by an *independent* working class, basing itself on the common interests of the world working class and the oppressed peoples *against* the exploiters of both.

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Origin of the Family. F. Engels. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 6*s*.

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Leninism. J. Stalin. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 7*s*. 6*d*.

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Theses on Peace

BY V. I. LENIN

[*Lenin's theses on peace were written on January 7th*, 1918, *at a time when the proletarian dictatorship had been established but when the interests of the socialist revolution which had already begun in Russia demanded the conclusion of peace with German imperialism even on unfavourable terms. Lenin's defence of his standpoint against the idea of a revolutionary war, or the demobilisation of the army without making peace, is of great interest as showing his application of Marxist analysis in the concrete circumstances of the stage reached by the Russian revolution. The theses were written for the discussion taking place in the Central Committee but were first published in "Pravda" on February 24th*, 1918. *They have been specially translated from the Russian for the* LABOUR MONTHLY.]

1. At the present moment the situation of the Russian Revolution is such that almost all workers and a huge majority of peasants are indubitably on the side of the Soviet power and the socialist revolution begun by it. To that extent the success of the Socialist Revolution in Russia is assured.

2. At the same time, the civil war provoked by the furious resistance of the possessing classes, who are superlatively conscious of being faced with the last and decisive battle for the preservation of private property in land, and in the means of production, has not yet reached its highest point. Victory in this war is guaranteed by Soviet power, but inevitably some time will elapse, inevitably not a little exertion of force will be needed, inevitably there will be a certain period of intense ruin and chaos, connected with every war—but with civil war in particular, before the resistance of the bourgeoisie will be crushed.

3. Moreover, this resistance in its less active and non-military forms: sabotage, buying hooligans, buying agents of the bourgeoisie who insinuate themselves into the ranks of the socialists in order to wreck their cause etc., etc.; this resistance has proved so stubborn and capable of assuming such varied forms that the struggle against it will inevitably drag out for some time longer and will hardly be concluded, in its main forms, before some months. But without a decisive victory over this passive and covert resistance of the bourgeoisie and its supporters, the success of the Socialist Revolution is impossible.

4. Finally, the organisational tasks of the socialist transformation in Russia are so big and difficult that to solve them, given the abundance of petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers of the Socialist proletariat, and the low cultural level of the latter, also demands a rather prolonged period of time.

5. All these circumstances, taken together, are such that for the success of Socialism in Russia there absolutely follows the necessity of a certain interval of time, not less than several months, in the course of which the Socialist Government must have completely free hands for victory over the bourgeosie, first of all in its own country, and for instituting wide and deep mass organisational work.

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6. The position of affairs in regard to the Socialist Revolution in Russia must be made the basis of every determination of the international tasks of our Soviet Power, for the international situation in the fourth year of the war has become such that it is quite impossible to calculate the probable moment of outbreak of revolution and of the overthrow of any of the European imperialist governments (including the German). There is no doubt that the Socialist Revolution in Europe must take place and will take place. All our hopes for the *final* victory of socialism are based on this conviction and this scientific forecast. Our propagandist activity in general, and the organisation of fraternisation in particular, must be strengthened and developed. But it would be a mistake to shape the tactics of the Socialist Government in Russia on attempts to determine whether the European, and especially the German, socialist revolution will or will not take place in the next half-year (or a similar short period). Since it is impossible to determine this by any means, all such attempts would objectively amount to a blind game of chance.

7. At the present moment, up to January 7th, 1918, the peace negotiations at Brest Litovsk have made it completely clear that in the German Government (which entirely controls the other governments of the quadruple alliance) the upper hand has been absolutely taken by the war party, which in essence has already put an ultimatum to Russia (from day-to-day one can expect, one must necessarily expect, its formal presentation also). This ultimatum is as follows: either continued war or an annexationist peace, i.e. a peace on the condition that while we give up all territory occupied by us, the Germans preserve *all* territory occupied by them and levy on us an indemnity (hidden under the appearance of payment for the maintenance of prisoners), an indemnity of the order of approximately three milliard roubles, with payment by instalments over some years.

8. The Socialist Government of Russia is faced with the question, demanding immediate solution, whether immediately to accept this annexationist peace or whether at once to wage a revolutionary war. In essence no intermediate solutions are possible here. No further postponements are realisable, because we have *already* done everything possible and impossible to artificially drag out the negotiations.

9. Looking at the arguments for immediate revolutionary war, we encounter first of all this argument, that a separate peace now will be objectively an agreement with the German imperialists, an "imperialist deal", etc., and that, consequently, such a peace would be a complete rupture with the basic principles of proletarian internationalism.

But this argument is obviously false. Workers who lose a strike and sign conditions for resumption of work unfavourable to them and favourable to the capitalist do not betray socialism. Only those betray Socialism who exchange advantages to a part of the workers for advantages to the capitalists, only such agreements are in principle impermissible.

One who calls the war against German imperialism a defensive and just war, but in fact receives support from the Anglo-French imperialists and conceals the secret agreements with them from the people, betrays socialism. One who, concealing nothing from the people and making no secret agreements with the imperialists, agrees to sign conditions of peace disadvantageous to a weak nation, advantageous to the imperialists of one group, does

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not commit the slightest treachery to socialism, if at the given moment forces are lacking for continuing the war.

10. Another argument for immediate war is that, by concluding peace, we objectively become agents of German imperialism, because we give it both the liberation of troops from our front and millions of prisoners, etc. But this argument too is obviously false, for a revolutionary war at this moment would make us objectively the agents of Anglo-French imperialism, giving the latter forces subsidiary to its aims. The British have directly offered our Chief of General Staff, Krylenko, 100 roubles a month for every soldier of ours in case of continuation of the war. Even if we do not take a penny from the Anglo-French, nevertheless objectively we shall be helping them by diverting part of the German armies.

From this aspect, in both cases, we do not fully extricate ourselves from one or the other imperialist connection, and indeed it is obvious that one cannot completely extricate oneself from it without overthrowing world imperialism. Hence the correct conclusion is this: that, from the moment of the victory of the Socialist Government in one of the countries, questions have to be solved not from the viewpoint of the preferableness of one imperialism or the other, but exclusively from the viewpoint of the best conditions for the development and strengthening of the Socialist Revolution which has already begun.

In other words: the basis of our tactics now should not be the principle which of the two imperialists it is more advantageous to aid now, but the principle how more surely and more reliably to guarantee to the Socialist Revolution the possibility of consolidation, or at any rate, of holding out in one country until other countries join it.

11. It is said that the German opponents of the war among the Social Democrats have now become "defeatists" and are asking us not to give way to German imperialism. But we recognised defeatism only in relation to *one's own* imperialist bourgeoisie, while we always rejected victory over a foreign imperialism, victory achieved in formal or actual alliance with a "friendly" imperialism, as a method impermissible in principle and in general worthless.

Consequently, this argument is only a variety of the previous one. If the German left Social Democrats proposed to us that we drag out the conclusion of a separate peace for a *definite* period, guaranteeing a revolutionary uprising in Germany within that period, then the question *might* arise for us differently. But the German lefts not only do not say this, but, on the contrary, formally declare: "Hold out as long as you can, but decide the question on considerations of the state of affairs in the *Russian* Socialist Revolution, for it is impossible to promise anything positive in regard to the German revolution."

12. It is said that we directly "promised" a revolutionary war in a number of party declarations, and that to conclude a separate peace will be a betrayal of our word.

This is not true. We spoke of the *necessity* for the Socialist Government "*to prepare and conduct*" a revolutionary war in the epoch of imperialism; we said this in order to fight against abstract pacifism, against the theory of complete denial of "defence of the fatherland" in the epoch of imperialism, and, finally, against the purely selfish instincts of a section of the soldiers,

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but we did not assume the obligation of starting a revolutionary war without reckoning how far it was possible to conduct it at this or that moment.

Even just now we must certainly *prepare* a revolutionary war. We shall fulfil this promise of ours, as in general we have fulfilled all our promises which could immediately be fulfilled: we tore up the secret treaties, we proposed a just peace to all peoples, we dragged out peace negotiations in every way and on several occasions in order to give other peoples the time to join in.

But the question whether it is possible *now immediately* to wage a revolutionary war, has to be decided by taking into account exclusively the material conditions which make it realisable and the interests of the Socialist Revolution which has already begun.

13. Bringing together the appraisal of the arguments for an immediate revolutionary war, one must come to the conclusion that such a policy would, perhaps, answer man's requirements in striving for the beautiful, the showy and dazzling, but would not at all take into account the objective relation of class forces and the material factors at the moment now being passed through of a Socialist revolution that has begun.

14. There is no doubt that our army at the present moment and in the coming weeks (and, probably, in the coming months) is absolutely not in a state for successfully repulsing a German offensive; firstly, in consequence of the extreme weariness and exhaustion of the majority of the soldiers, in circumstances of an unprecedented collapse in regard to food supplies, replacement of the over-exhausted, etc., secondly, in consequence of the complete unfitness of the cavalry, which dooms our artillery to inevitable ruin, thirdly, in consequence of the absolute impossibility of defending the coastal region from Riga to Reval, which provides the enemy with the surest chance of conquering the rest of Livonia, followed by Esthonia, and surrounding a large section of our troops from the rear, and finally, the taking of Petersburg.

15. Further, there is also not the slightest doubt that the peasant majority of our army at the present moment would certainly be in favour of an annexationist peace, but not for an immediate revolutionary war, because the work of Socialist reorganisation of the army, the pouring into it of detachments of the Red Guard and so on, has only just begun.

With the complete democratisation of the army, it would be adventurism to conduct a war against the will of the majority of the soldiers, while to create a really stable and ideologically strong Socialist workers' and peasants' army would require months and months at least.

16. The poorest peasantry in Russia is capable of supporting a Socialist Revolution led by the working class; it is incapable immediately, at the present moment, of embarking on a serious revolutionary war. To ignore this objective relation of classes in regard to this question would be a fatal mistake.

17. Consequently, as regards a revolutionary war at the present time, the matter stands as follows:

If the German revolution were to break out and be victorious in the next three or four months, then, perhaps, the tactics of immediate revolutionary war would not wreck our Socialist Revolution.

If, however, the German revolution does not take place in the coming months, then on the war being continued the course of events will inevitably be such that very heavy defeats will force Russia to conclude a still more disadvantageous separate peace, and this peace will be concluded, not with a

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Socialist Government, but with some other (e.g. a bloc of the bourgeois Rada and the Chernov adherents or something of the sort). For the peasant army, unbearably spent by the war, after the first defeats, probably within not months but weeks, will overthrow the Socialist Workers' Government.

18. With such a state of affairs, it would be absolutely impermissible tactics to set at hazard the already begun Socialist Revolution in Russia merely because the German Revolution might begin in the nearest, shortest space of time, measurable in weeks. Such tactics would be adventurism. We have no right to take such risks.

19. And the German Revolution will not be made more difficult, as regards its objective foundations, if we conclude a separate peace. Probably, for a time, an outburst of chauvinism will weaken it, but the position of Germany will remain extremely serious. The war with England and America will be prolonged, aggressive imperialism will be utterly and finally unmasked on both sides. The example of the Socialist Soviet Republic in Russia will be a living example to the peoples of all countries, and the propagandist, revolutionising influence of this model will be gigantic. Here—the bourgeois order and the completely unmasked predatory war of the two groups of vultures, there —peace and the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

20. In concluding a separate peace, we shall be freeing ourselves, to the greatest degree *possible at the present moment*, from both hostile imperialist groups, utilising their hostility and war, making more difficult a deal between them against us, obtaining a certain period when our hands are free to use for continuing and consolidating the Socialist Revolution. The reorganisation of Russia on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the basis of nationalisation of the banks and big industry, with natural commodity exchange between the towns and village consumers' societies of the small peasants, is economically fully possible, on the condition of being assured some months of peaceful work. And such reorganisation will make Socialism invincible both in Russia and in the whole world, creating at the same time a stable economic basis for a mighty workers' and peasants' Red Army.

21. A really revolutionary war at the present moment would be a war of the Socialist Republic against the bourgeois countries with the clearly expressed aim, fully approved by the Socialist army, of overthrowing the bourgeoisie in the other countries. However, at the *present* moment, we *certainly* cannot set ourselves this aim. We would fight now, objectively, for the liberation of Poland, Lithuania and Courland. But not a single Marxist can deny, without breaking with the fundamentals of Marxism and socialism in general, that the interests of socialism stand higher than the interests of the right of nations to self-determination. Our Socialist republic has done everything it could, and will continue to do so, to realise the right to self-determination of Finland, the Ukraine, etc. But if the concrete situation developed in such a way that the existence of the Socialist republic is put in jeopardy at a given moment by the violation of the right to self-determination of some nations (Poland, Lithuania, Courland, etc.), then, of course, the interests of the preservation of the Socialist Republic stand higher.

Therefore, one who says: "we cannot sign a disgraceful, indecent, etc., peace, betray Poland and so on", fails to notice that, by concluding peace on the condition of the liberation of Poland, he would merely *still further* strengthen

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German imperialism against England, against Belgium, Serbia and other countries. Peace on condition of the liberation of Poland, Lithuania, Courland, would be a "patriotic" peace *from the point of view of Russia*, but would in no way cease to be a peace *with the annexationists*, with the German imperialists.

Written January 7th, 1918.

"*Pravda*", *No.* 34, *February 24th*, 1918.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Masterpiece of Marxism

Leninism by Joseph Stalin. Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd. 1940. 7*s.* 6*d.*

SOME WEEKS ago an enterprising capitalist publisher, knowing the great interest of the public in the Soviet Union and in the figure of Comrade Stalin, played a clever trick on book-buyers. He brought out a hotch-potch of fragments from Stalin's writings and speeches, pasted together with an illiterate and indigestible commentary, under the smart title of "Stalin's Kampf". The book provoked the requisite number of crushing sarcasms by British reviewers at Stalin's expense, and was duly forgotten.

It would be folly to expect those taken in on that occasion to do themselves the simple justice of buying the new edition of Stalin's *Leninism*—a full compendium of authentic texts. One of the curses of capitalist society is that it deprives the intellectuals above all of the capacity and the courage to think independently, and particularly few reviewers in the capitalist press retain those qualities. But those who are active in the service of the working class owe it to themselves and Socialism to study this truly matchless book.

One general remark needs to be passed. The capitalist critics betrayed their insincerity and servility most clearly of all, perhaps, in their comments that Stalin's thought is "unoriginal" or "banal". In reality, if one reads the speeches and writings of a Baldwin, a Chamberlain, a Gladstone, or a Churchill, and then turns to the pages of Stalin's *Leninism*, one is struck squarely between the eyes by the original, independent, granite-like quality of Stalin's close-grained logic. All the drivelling inconsequence, the sickly sentimentalities, the frothing unsubstantial phrases of the capitalist politicians are ruthlessly exposed by comparison with the vigorous, unbending thought of this great proletarian revolutionary.

They laugh at us Communists, and dub us Stalinists, just as a generation ago they taunted us with being Leninists, and three generations ago they ridiculed our predecessors as Marxists. But we are proud of being Marx's and Engels' men, Lenin's men and Stalin's men, just because Stalin in the era of the second imperialist war and the second higher wave of world revolution embodies the principles and methods of the Lenin of 1921, as Lenin in his day embodied those of Marx and Engels in 1871, the year of the Paris Commune. This book is the living proof of it. Consider some of its contents.

It includes that unsurpassed conspectus of Marxism applied to modern conditions, "Foundations of Leninism", which appeared first as a series of lectures. Every fundamental question of the world at present is dealt with there. In the next chapter

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—"The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists"—are examined with equal compactness and precise severity the fundamental questions of the Russian Revolution. In particular, the whole range of issues between Leninism and Trotskyism are examined, giving one the key to the root problems of relations between the Russian revolution and world revolution, between the proletariat and the peasantry within the U.S.S.R., which come up again and again in Soviet politics.

It is an education for every Socialist worth his salt—and that means every Socialist who looks forward to seeing the British working class masters of this country—to see how the masters of a great country face old problems in a new form. Most valuable in this respect are Stalin's speech on "Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R". (December, 1929), and his speech at the Stakhanov conference in 1935. His analysis of the principles underlying the Draft Constitution of 1936 is a valuable reminder of the nature of this great State which the imperialists on both sides of this war vainly try to drag in for their own class purposes.

In this volume are the remarkable "Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism"—which would be a pretty good text book of Socialist internationalism in itself, particularly for those who have at any time fallen under the influence of the fake "internationalism" of writers like Laski, Vigilantes and other pedlars of apologies for British imperialism.

Here, too, are the famous Congress reports made by Stalin in his capacity of General Secretary of the C.P.S.U., in 1934 and 1939; his analyses of the economic situation in the capitalist world which no capitalist statesman in history could rival, his incisive description of the drift to war, his frank and lucid explanations of the basis of relationship between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, and his famous winged words—like the warning to would-be aggressors to "keep their pigs' snouts out of the Soviet garden" and his famous warning (suppressed, alas, by the British press, to the unutterable woe of the British people) that the Soviet Union would not play the game of those accustomed to having others pull chestnuts out of the fire for them.

As though specially for the imbeciles who repeat the phrases about Stalin's "unoriginal" mind, which the press millionaires order them to write, there is the epoch-making "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", which Stalin wrote in 1938, as the fourth chapter of the Short History of the C.P.S.U. The great writers of Marxism have contributed many fine pages to developing Marxist thought in the realm of philosophy, but this one is quite unique. In simplicity of expression it is as outstanding as in profoundness of thinking.

Turn back, after this book, to Marxist classics like *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx's *Gotha Programme*, or Engels' *Anti-Duhring*, and you will see in what real sense the founders of scientific Socialism live again in the leader of world revolution to-day.

QUAESTOR

Our Socialist Fatherland

An Englishwoman in the U.S.S.R. by Violet Lansbury. Putnam. 12*s.* 6*d.*

For thirteen years Violet Lansbury lived in the Soviet Union and participated in the greatest and most significant experience of the human race. The building of the first socialist state, which ended the exploitation of nation by nation, of man by man and (perhaps of particular import to the writer and to many others of us) of woman by man, did not automatically flow from the day the Russian workers gained power.

One of the things Violet Lansbury set herself most seriously to study and understand from the very beginning was just this planning for the socialist state, what it was caused difficulties, and how the treacheries were attempted and finally defeated. Through all these years she saw the strength, determination and wisdom of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, attentively listening to the needs and desires of the masses, planning the tasks to be undertaken and harnessing the people's enthusiasm to their fulfilment.

The outstanding achievement of this

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book is to show this relation of the human beings who are the Soviet citizens to the political, economic and social tasks of their Soviet State. It completely answers the malicious slanders of "regimentation", of "dictatorship of the Communist Party", "suppression of criticism", etc., etc., so loved by our "left" critics of the Soviet Union.

Again and again it gives examples of the full and eager participation of the people in every direction. An everyday affair of inconveniences of dust and smells troubling the women in the workers' estate where the author was living—a deputation would go to the Manager of the House Committee and discuss with him the plans to remedy the grievances.

> "We all knew that it was our own particular job, as citizens of Moscow, to make our voices heard about every phase of life that caused those around us discomfort or trouble. We in the Krasnaya Presnya district were particularly fortunate in having a splendid manager on the House Committee; also in having a splendid delegate to the District Soviet in the form of an elderly woman, who had brought up nine children, who remembered the days of 1905 when she was a small child, and who still took a serious interest both in the Trokhgornaya Textile Mill, at which she had worked until she was pensioned off, and in the locality in which she lived. It was people like these who got things going. They are to be found all over the Soviet Union. And they, together with the rest of the population, who know by now full well that every reasonable and possible improvement will come their way for the asking, do their utmost to see that the country is kept in order, and that their delegates to the Soviets do their duty by the population."
>
> "That is how democracy works in the Soviet Union from the bottom. It is only one expression of it. One could cite thousands."

The launching of the historic Five Year Plan:

> "So the Five Year Plan set a big task on the shoulders of the Soviet people; the country was to be industrialised, equipped with the finest modern heavy machinery; it was also to have collectivised agriculture, equally splendidly equipped with the finest modern agricultural machinery and implements."
>
> "There were those in the Soviet Union who did not believe this tremendous step was called for. They said the strain on the people would be so great that there would be revolts, especially among the peasantry. They said that the Soviet Union could safely rely upon the working people abroad to put pressure on their governments should difficulties arise in the future."
>
> "Those who formed the majority of the Soviet Government and the Communist Party, put their faith in the people in the towns and the poor and middle peasants in the villages. A country that had come through such struggles in the past could not afford to risk going under. There was to be no risking. The people of the Soviet Union would be told the position, and they themselves would take the decision."
>
> "The Plan was launched."
>
> "For us in Moscow, who had keenly followed the arguments in Party meetings, which everybody was allowed to attend, who had closely followed the newspapers, who had argued among ourselves with our friends and workmates, the decision was made."
>
> "For me, knowing all the truth about intervention, having been closely connected with the Councils of Action, through my work on the old *Herald*, knowing the difficulties abroad for the militant workers and the half-hearted ways of their leaders, the situation was clear. The Five Year Plan was something that had to be fulfilled whatever it cost."

These two extracts show the quality of *An Englishwoman in the U.S.S.R.*, and reveal Violet Lansbury as a writer with a gift for explaining the living principles of socialism vividly and with a simplicity that will win many converts to support of the Soviet Union and to the Communist Party which leads it. I for one understand more fully than ever before the strength we draw from the Soviet Union, as the Socialist base of mankind, and the need for us all to support and defend its achievements with all our strength and courage.

It is an ironical fact, from which the workers here will draw the full historical lesson, that Violet Lansbury lived through the years of restriction and rationing in the Soviet Union, until the need for restriction no longer existed, as the prosperity of the country leapt forward; and came back to her native land to find us all plunging deeper and deeper into suffering and privation through the war which the Soviet Union strove so hard to avert.

HILDA VERNON

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Labour Monthly Discussion Groups

SINCE last month's notes we have had news of a fair number of Discussion Groups newly formed or in preparation. The list below includes *all* Groups, whether in being or about to be born. We do this in order to encourage readers everywhere to write in for details. To readers who cannot find the name of their town or borough in this list we say: start a group yourself! We will send you some notes we have prepared to guide organisers and will endeavour to put you into touch with local readers, so far as we know them. It must be realised that we know only about 10 per cent of our readership, so that the bringing together of a group of readers must largely be a local effort.

DISCUSSION NOTES prepared under R. Palme Dutt's supervision have proved very popular and we have every reason to believe they have helped to maintain a high political level of discussion. "Notes" for January are ready and we shall be glad to send them to anyone interested, whether for purposes of a LABOUR MONTHLY Discussion Group or not. But please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

DISCUSSION GROUPS ORGANISER

134 Ballards Lane, London, N.3.
December 24, 1940.

LONDON

Camden Town	Hampstead	Stoke Newington
Edgware and Mill Hill	Hampstead Garden Suburb	Walthamstow
Enfield	St. Pancras	Whitechapel
Finchley	Stamford Hill	

PROVINCES

Aberystwyth	Greenock	Portsmouth
Aylesbury	Halifax	Preston
Barrow-in-Furness	Harpenden	Radlett
Bath	Hyde, Cheshire	Reading
Birmingham	Kenton, Middlesex	Renfrew
Bishop's Stortford	Letchworth	Sheffield
Blackburn	Liverpool	Shrewsbury
Bournemouth	Llandudno	Stockton-on-Tees
Bristol	Manchester	Sidcup
Bromley (Kent)	Minehead	St. Albans
Cambridge	Nelson	Sudbury, Suffolk
Carlisle	Newcastle-on-Tyne	Welwyn Garden City
Colchester	Oxford	Waltham Cross, Herts
Farnham	Pinner, Middlesex	Warrington
Gravesend	Peterborough	Woodford, Essex

SPECIAL GROUPS

London Cab Drivers	S.E. London Busmen	Medical

N.B. Will anyone connected with Groups we believe may exist at Port Talbot and Derby please get into touch with us?

BOUND VOLUMES FOR EARLIER YEARS

We still have supplies, though very limited, of bound volumes of LABOUR MONTHLY for most years since first publication in 1921. We list them below, together with prices. Where any year is missing from the list, it means we have no supply remaining for that year in bound volume form; in some cases we still have loose copies and enquiries are invited as to these.

The 22 Volumes of LABOUR MONTHLY constitute a Marxist history of our own time, of the interval between the two imperialist wars. Profounder understanding of the immediate present is to be gained by reading and studying these past issues of LABOUR MONTHLY.

Prices are as follows:

1922 (Jan.–June)	30/–	1927	15/–	1932	7/6
1922 (July–Dec.)	30/–	1929	20/–	1933	10/–
1923 (Jan.–June)	30/–	1930 (1 only)	20/–	1934	5/–
1923 (July–Dec.)	30/–	1931	7/6	1935	5/–
1924 (12 months)	25/–	1936, 1937, 1939 are out of		1938	7/6
1925	15/–	print			

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Encouraged by the triumphant success of our 3-months' Special Rate Scheme for 6 and 12 months' subscriptions, which concluded on December 31, we now make a special and extremely attractive offer to all those readers who send in 12 months' subscriptions *in January*.

At the end of 1941 *we will bind each reader's* 12 *copies in the standard binding* (*cloth-covered boards with gold lettering*) *FREE OF CHARGE.*

There are merely two conditions attaching to this exceptional offer. First, readers who wish to avail themselves of this offer must return their 12 copies to us post paid and in suitable condition for binding. Second, subscriptions must reach our office by first post not later than February 7, 1941.

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To be a subscription reader of LABOUR MONTHLY means that you get your copy immediately on publication, delivered by post to your own home. By becoming a subscription reader in January the 12 issues during 1941 will be bound in a handsome volume, a permanent and noble addition to your bookshelves, *free of cost*. LABOUR MONTHLY, 1941, *Vol.* 23, will depict and analyse the unfolding tragedy of the second World War and the dawning revolt against its sanguinary horror. It will be an historic volume, accordingly, for events of the greatest significance for mankind's future will take place in the months ahead.

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A LETTER TO OUR READERS

[illegible]
[illegible],
[illegible].
[illegible], 1941.

Dear [illegible],

This may be the first copy of LABOUR MONTHLY you have ever read. On the other hand, you may be an "old timer". Whichever it may be, we are confident you realise and appreciate its "colossal" function in relation to the working class movement in all five continents of the world without a party and war.

As you read its pages, does not the thought pass across your mind that there are friends of yours, workmates, fellow-members of your trade union, political party or co-op, who ought to be reading it too? It is our purpose to try to translate that thought into effective action.

LABOUR MONTHLY has expanded to its present considerable circulation mainly through recommendation. This has been going on quietly and persistently and we have played no part in it. But we now wish to play a part!

Our invitation to you is to fill in on the form below the names and addresses of people you know to whom we may send a free specimen copy of LABOUR MONTHLY. Put the form into an envelope addressed, "Circulation Manager, LABOUR MONTHLY, 134 Ballards Lane, London, N.3", and post it with a penny stamp. For that penny we give our appreciative thanks.

Though we provide for 3 names only, if you know of a larger number who are reasonably likely to be interested and perhaps become regular readers, then put their names on a separate additional piece of paper.

With thanks for your co-operation and an assurance of our firm intention to maintain, even develop, the standards of our magazine.

Yours sincerely,

LABOUR MONTHLY

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